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BETTY PEACH,

—A—

Tale of Colonial Days,

—BY—

*Mary*  
M. DEVEREUX.

MERRILL H. GRAVES,  
PUBLISHER,  
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Marblehead,  
Mass.



TO MY GRANDFATHER,  
CAPTAIN JOHN DEVEREUX,  
OF MARBLEHEAD,  
THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED  
IN LOVING MEMORY.







# BETTY PEACH.

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## CHAPTER I.

On a strip of white sand, under the sea-wall, which, located and partially constructed by nature, whose handiwork appeared in huge bulwarks of rock-piles, had been brought to completion by the rude skill of man, a rowboat was beached.

Half leaning, half sitting upon it, was a young man of stalwart build, who seemed the very embodiment of robust health and vigor; and near him was a girl, apparently much younger than himself, who stood with uncovered head, swinging her hat by its pink ribbons. They were talking together, and the man's attitude and ex-



pression bespoke great earnestness, and as though the subject of their conversation was, to him, a matter of vast moment.

She was a dimpled, rounded little body, not taller than the average girl of fourteen, although the family Bible on her Grandfather's table bore witness to the fact that on a certain May day, seventeen years before, was born Bethia Peach.

The young man was saying to her, in a tone full of entreaty, "Won't ye tell me why ye sent me back the coral pin I brought last trip, Betty? Just as I sailed, too, an' so could say nothing."

She stirred the sand and pebbles with the tip of her small, steel-buckled shoe, but was demurely silent; and the thought shot through Dan Marr's brain of how distractingly pretty she was, as she stood there with all those big loose rings of dark hair over her low sweet brow, and the curling lashes of her downcast eyes looking blacker by contrast, as they seemed resting on her peachy cheeks.

"Betty!" he exclaimed, almost sternly; and he stretched out his strong brown hand, as if to emphasize, by a touch on one of the round, white arms the pink sleeves left partly bared, the authority now sounding in his tone.



But the girl stepped back a pace, eluding his grasp, and her big soft eyes flashed a little as she raised them to his.

"Give me the basket o' eggs from the boat, will ye please, an' let me go," was all she said; then adding, "Grand'ther will be wondering where I am."

"I don't believe ye'd act so, my girl, an' ye know how cruel ye seem, an' how ye make my heart ache," he sighed heavily as he spoke but made no movement to reach the basket.

"I am sure I cannot help what I may seem. An' ye'd let old Bijah row me home, ye'd have had no heart ache to talk 'bout," and there was something suggestive of a pout in the tone of her voice, as also in the expression of the red lips through which it issued.

"Wouldn't I? Much ye know 'bout it. Why I've had nothing but heart achings e'er since Billy brought me the package from ye. An' I thought (more fool I, for it) 'twas some last parting word, such as I was hungering for, such as I'd have sent, an' I could, to ye. An' after we'd got under way, I went to my cabin to see what ye'd sent me, there lay the coral pin I'd given ye just the day before, down in Echo Cove. An' I'd



thought ye loved me, that day." His voice broke mournfully, and he stared off into the distance with moody eyes.

"I never told ye such a thing!" she exclaimed, her color deepening.

The young man's dark gray eyes came back from their abstraction, and rested upon her sweet face, and a world of tenderness softened them as he said, in a tone which his deep, strong voice made as a caress, "No, ye didn't tell me, Betty, but ye let me kiss ye that afternoon."

"Aren't ye fine, to throw it at me now?" she interrupted, her voice sounding as though tears were not far away. But he went on, "An' then, that night at Polly Holcombe's dance, ye'd scarcely speak to me. Ye seemed to be happier with that cursed English scoundrel."

"Captain Rathborn's a gentleman, an' no scoundrel. Perhaps an' he were asked his opinion, he might say the coat fitted some other folk best."

Dan set his teeth and scowled murderously, as, leaning forward, he said, "An' ye mean by that he's watching for chance to bring the officers o' the Crown down from Boston after us, for smuggling, your Grandfather'd have the better chance, I



trow, o' letting Captain put the name 'scoundrel' across his door."

Betty chanced to glance over her shoulder while Dan was speaking, and she saw the old adage verified, for there of a surety was her Grandfather not very far away, and it was evident from his manner that his keen old eyes had observed them.

"There goes Grand'ther now!" she exclaimed, in a tone of alarm, and she advanced toward the boat as though to take her basket.

"Yes," said Dan, in a tone almost of contempt, and making no move toward giving her the basket. "There he goes, an' he be for all the world like a frightened jack-snipe, with his long nose, an' his coat tails flying, looking back at us."

"Looking?" she repeated nervously, keeping her eyes fixed on her lover's face, while her back was turned toward her relative; and her agitation was such that she failed to take notice of Dan's sarcastic comparison.

"Yes, he be looking; an' why should ye be so troubled o'er it?" The young man was now standing erect, and, as he spoke, he came up closely to the girl.

"He has forbidden me to speak with ye alone."



She dropped her eyes, and began nervously to stir the sand again with her shoe tip.

"He has ? An' why ?" Dan demanded, almost angrily.

"I don't know," the girl replied, with still greater agitation.

"Well, I know !" the young man exclaimed, hotly. "I know !" he repeated. "He wants ye to marry that d—d Englishman !"

"Dan ! How dare ye ?" Betty's voice was full of indignation, and she drew herself up to the extreme limit of her small stature.

"Yes, he does," Dan said, with dogged insistence. "I tell ye I've heard the talk more than once since I came back."

"What talk ?" the girl demanded, angrily. "Who dares to talk o' me in that way ?"

"'Twas at the Pine Tree," Dan replied, a little more calmly, and seemingly pleased at her display of indignation. "I heard it the first night I was ashore, o' how much Captain Rathborn came down to the town now, an' how thick he an' your Grandfather seemed to be. An' they all said 'twas plain to see 'twas ye he was after, an' that ye're Grandfather had said he would give ye to him some day."



"Just as if I were a piece o' land or a cow!" Betty cried, her white, round chin tip-tilted with indignation, as she raised her little head still higher, and stamped her foot angrily. Dan, meanwhile, was gazing at her as though he found, in her flashing eyes and flushed cheeks, new food for his admiration. But she recalled him to his senses by adding, with a touch of scorn in her voice, "An' weren't ye a good friend, ye're first night ashore, to go to a tavern an' sit talking o' me in such fashion, with a parcel o' brawlers an' empty-pates?"

"I did no such thing, Betty, an' ye know well I wouldn't," he replied, earnestly. "I had met Goody Fletcher crying that her uncle had been since early evening at the Pine Tree, an' I went to get him home. Ye know he will drink too much. There was never more reckless fool, when carrying too much grog, than old Dick Hadley, to say naught o' the way he spends money not his own at such times, an' so gets poor Goody into trouble with her husband, for countenancing him 'bout the place."

Betty's eyes, looking straight into his own pleading ones, had grown somewhat softer, as had also the tone of her voice, as she asked, "An' where beside have ye heard such talk?"



"Nancy Harris told me that the Captain brought ye fine scarlet cloth from Boston for a new cloak last winter," the young man answered. "An' she said he'd been to Meeting-house with ye more than once."

At sound of the other girl's name, Betty's red mouth grew narrow, and her eyes were now sparkling with anger again.

"Since Mistress Harris knows so much," she exclaimed, "it is great pity ye had not consulted her 'bout the coral pin. Try ye an' see an she cannot cure ye're 'heart aches'."

This suggestion so angered Dan that he gave utterance to expletives in which he referred to Miss Nancy in language more forcible than polite; at which the girl, seeming rather to enjoy his discomfiture, added, in the same taunting tone, "Aye, say ye so o' her now? So more likely, when next ye see her, ye may say to her o' me. Ye seemed to find no one else worth talking to or dancing with the night at Polly Holcombe's, which ye've just been mentioning."

"Ye know well I danced with her because I couldn't get ye," the young man exclaimed, hotly.

"I found ye laughing an' dancing with her an I came," she retorted, with equal asperity.



"'Twas she asked me," he began, and then stopped short, and looked foolish, as if regretting having been betrayed into such an ungallant speech. The girl seemed not to be of his mind, however, or, if she was, did not show it, as she went on, rather eagerly, "I was late, an' ye know I had to be late, Dan; that I had to wait 'til Grand'ther had gone to his meeting. He will never favor my going to a dance."

"An' did ye send the coral pin back next day because o' thinking I cared for Nancy?" He spoke with feverish eagerness, as he possessed himself of her little hand, and held it close in both his own.

The girl stood with drooped lids, no longer swinging her broad white hat; and she made no reply.

"Betty," he whispered, and there was something in his tone and manner which she had never seen before, "Don't ye know ye have all the love my heart can hold, that there be no sounding the depth o' it for ye, my own sweet little maid?"

She looked up at him now, and the dark eyes were brimming.

"Betty, Betty, Sweetheart," he murmured ten-



derly, bending over her. But as if fearful of what might follow, she snatched her hand away, and started back exclaiming, "No, no, say no more ! Not here, not now !"

"Will ye come up to old fort on the hill to-morrow night at eight?" he asked, and an expression of hope and happiness lighted up his honest face.

Betty hesitated. "Say ye will," the young man pleaded. "Betty, my own sweet little maid, say ye will. I have so much to tell; I have to tell ye I am no longer mate o' the 'Jason.' I've bought a little craft o' my own, an' so I've done with smuggling, I tell ye."

At this, a bright smile broke over her face, showing her white, little teeth between the scarlet of her lips, and making a roguish dimple in each soft round cheek.

"Oh, Dan, I am glad," she said looking up into his face.

"Are ye?" he said, smiling down at her. "I hoped ye'd be. Ye see I could not believe ye'd done with me, though ye did send back the coral pin. An' I wanted to be my own master for ye're sake, Betty; an' a master who runs foul o' the King's law, be sure, in the end, to run foul o'



something worse. An' ye'll have my neck for ye own, I won't risk a rope collar getting twisted 'bout it."

While he was speaking, Betty's eyes had been dwelling upon the young man's brown neck with a tender light stealing into them.

"Yes, I'll come," she said, softly, and glancing about as though fearful of unseen ears hearing too much.

"My own sweetheart!" he murmured, devouring her with his eyes, but not offering to touch her hand again, though he had drawn still closer to her. "An' may I bring a string o' gold beads I got for ye in Genoa?" he asked, anxiously.

"For me, a string of gold beads for me?" she exclaimed, her eyes, in spite of her, alight with pleasure.

"Yes, an' I want ye to put them 'bout that sweet white throat, an' say, 'this be the line that leads straight to Dan Marr's heart,' an' the other end be made so taut only God Himself can break it. An' whether I be at your side, or in China, all my dear little maid has to do, whenever she wants anything in my power to do or give, be it my life, or a ship's biscuit, or aught that may lie between the two, she's but to speak."



"Dan, do ye love me so much?" she asked, and her eyes filled again, and her voice was tremulous.

"So much, little maid. It will take ye all ye life (an' God grant it be a long one, with me), all o' it 'twould take, for ye to find out how much. Perhaps not e'en then would ye know, not 'til we get o'er there."

A new light seemed to grow on Dan's handsome face as he spoke, as though from the reflection of the spirit within; and his eyes looked off, over Betty's small dark head, to the sunset, where, amid the molten golden sea, there lay islands of tinted clouds, looking dreamy and calm as the beaches of the far-away Fortunate Isles.



## CHAPTER II.

Less than half an hour after, Betty, sitting alone up in her dormer-windowed chamber, looked out upon the gloaming with a light upon her wistful little face that Dan's fond eyes had never seen there. She was pondering deeply all that had been said, and once she laughed softly; and then, as though ashamed of her own happiness, she covered her face with her hands.

Outside, low down among the branches of the gnarled apple trees, there still came a yellow glimmer, and up in the southeast was set the sharply defined crescent of the harvest moon.

By and by there came a gentle tap at her closed door, and the voice of old Cata, saying, "Does ye wish ter set de table dis night, fer tea, chile?"

"No!" she replied, sharply, scarcely conscious of what she was saying until the sound of her own voice startled her. Then, her kind heart smiting her, as she reminded herself of the old



cook's day's work, which had been harder than usual, she sprang to her feet, and sped down the winding stairs so quickly that she was with the negress before she had reached the floor below.

"Never mind, Precious, I kin do it," said old Cata, feebly remonstrative, as she perceived her young mistress' intent.

"That ye shall not ; go to the kitchen !" said Betty, imperiously ; and she proceeded herself to lay the dainty linen, woven so long ago by her dead mother's girlish fingers.

The dim light of candles burning in the two brass candlesticks, burnished until they shone like gold, revealed the other occupant of the room, a misshapen, humpbacked lad, sitting upon the settee by the stone hearth, directly under the light of one of the candles, and with a worn book open on his knees.

The room was a long, low one, with oak panelings. Two high, red-curtained windows looked seaward, their deep, broad, oaken sills so wide and low as to serve for comfortable seats. The vines growing thickly outside, tapped occasionally upon the small, diamond shaped panes, for the air was grown chill, and the wind from the sea was rising.



Pausing a moment as she bustled to and fro between the table and the mahogany sideboard, upon whose top shone glass and china, and as well from the now opened doors, Betty said, "Ye should not try to read any more to-night, Billy."

"I am not reading." The boy's voice had an abstracted undertone which caught the girl's attention, and she asked, as she came and stood by him, "What be ye thinking o', then?"

He looked up at her, glanced at the open door, and then, lowering his tone, he said, "Betty, did ye know Dan Marr was ashore?"

She blushed and moved away again, as she replied in equally low tones, "Yes, I saw him."

"Come here, Betty," the boy now said with much earnestness, "I want to tell ye somewhat. An hour back, I was up in the seat in the old chestnut tree at the foot o' the garden. Peter Trower an' Adam Powers came along the road, an' stood by our wall, talking. They did not see me; an' I heard Adam say that Dan had bought a craft o' his own, an' he was going to turn traitor; an' he was to be done away with, afore he got chance to inform."

Betty's eyes grew terrified, and her color paled,



as she gripped the boy's shoulder with a strength of which her small fingers seemed incapable.

"Oh, Bett, don't pinch me so; ye hurt!" he exclaimed, moving restlessly. She released him, and whispered, "Go on, go on, tell me all they said, Billy."

"I will; but don't ye pinch me so again. That was all they said 'bout Dan; only Peter swore, I tell ye, an' I looked down through the leaves an' his face looked like murder. Then Adam went on to tell how he'd been up to Pine Tree with Grand'ther an' Captain Rathborn, an' they had told him."

"Captain Rathborn? Betty interrupted interrogatively.

"Yes," Billy replied. "The Captain's here; I saw them taking the horses out his coach this afternoon, when I was up in the Inn yard."

"Well, go on," the girl said, with a show of impatience. "What else did ye hear?"

"Not much else, for then they went off together down road. Oh, Betty! There's Grand'ther now!" He ended abruptly, and in a somewhat terrified whisper, as a heavy footfall sounded on the stone step outside, and beat a hasty retreat kitchenward, while Betty resumed her bustling.



Raising her eyes as the door was pushed open roughly, she saw the old man standing upon the threshold glowering at her. Forcing herself to meet his eyes calmly for a moment, she paused, as if waiting for him to speak. He said nothing, however, but stood glaring at her; then coming in, he closed the door, and crossed to his own room, directly opposite. Pausing there a second, he said, in a harsh voice, and without looking around, "Lay a plate for a guest; an' see to it, Mistress, that ye make yourself agreeable to Captain Rathborn when he comes to-night." And with this, the old man passed in, closing the door noisily after him.

With a face full of resolution and defiance, Betty arranged the extra seat; but all the time her poor little heart was throbbing with its new anxiety, and her active little brain was in a whirl. From what Billy had said she was sure that some great danger was hanging over her lover, and that her Grandfather and the dashing English Captain were in some plot against him. It was also evident that the Captain was on good terms with the smugglers of whom this same Adam Powers was a leading spirit. And she recalled how, some two years previous, young Tom



Hathaway, tired of the lawless business, had spoken of going to Boston, to seek the honest employment a relative in that city had offered; and that three days afterwards his body had been washed ashore — some of the old women had said, with bruised and battered features, and the marks of black fingers on his throat. This rumor had been quickly hushed, however, and the theory established that Tom had somehow fallen overboard; the rocks being blamed for the marks of bruising.

And the girl now recalling how fiercely her Grandfather had bidden her hold her tongue, when she had repeated these rumors to him, remembered how she had always, in a vague way, associated the stern, heartless old man with this tragedy.

A little later, when they were at the table, Betty grew cold and shuddered as she sat opposite his dark, evil face and poured his tea. Captain Rathborn was a guest, but the girl had not the power to exert herself to reply, save in monosyllables, to his gay talk and fulsome compliments. Indeed her poor little heart sank with foreboding whenever she was forced to look into his blue eyes, bent upon her with an intentness not to be mistaken.



Even Billy's presence would have been a welcome help ; but the boy was having his evening meal in the kitchen, which he was ever welcome to do, for Squire Peach troubled himself little about the lad, so long as he kept himself out of the way. He was the orphaned child of the old man's wilful daughter, whom he had cared for as for nothing else on earth, save money ; and he appeared to look upon the little cripple as the outward and visible sign of his own child's ingratitude.

At length the meal was over ; and when the Captain and her Grandfather were shut in the old man's private den, with their pipes and grog, Betty stole to the kitchen in search of Billy. But old Cata told her that the boy, after eating his supper, had gone out. Then the girl wrapped herself in a warm cloak, and drawing the hood of it over her head, went in search of him, although hoping all the time that he had gone to find Dan, and put him in possession of the facts he had ascertained. She well knew the idolatrous love Billy had always felt for the big sailor ever since the days when, a tiny mite, he used to climb up on his knee to listen to marvellous tales of sea adventure, of foreign folk, and far away lands.



Betty searched the garden carefully, calling the boy's name softly now and then, until she was assured he was not there. Then she went down to the shore, and, standing there under the stars, with the waves washing in on the sand with the quiet peace of the full tide, she gave the shrill whistle which he and she had always used for a signal. Then she listened; but no sound came to her except the night wind, and the washing of the waves. Repeating the signal several times, and with a like result, she was satisfied at last that Billy was nowhere about the place.

This thought made her heart feel lighter, as she reasoned that he had gone to warn Dan of his danger.

She did not care to meet her Grandfather and Captain Rathborn again, and so, instead of returning to the house, she seated herself upon the rocks by the shore, and remained there musing over all she had heard and seen, her mind full of doubt and perplexity.

She sat here, cudgeling her poor little brain for a long time; then, realizing that it must be getting late, she arose and walked slowly toward that which she was forced to call "home." As



she approached the door, she heard the sound of voices within the hall, and recognizing them as belonging to those whom she desired to avoid, she hastened to conceal herself in the thick growth of bushes surrounding the house.

Just then the door opened more widely and Captain Rathborn came out, her Grandfather standing behind him with a lighted candle in one hand, while the crooked, claw-like fingers of the other were held so as to shield the wavering flame.

The Captain was saying with a laugh, and in a louder tone than he perhaps would have used had he been drinking less freely, "Remember, old Skinflint, what the immortal Shakespeare tells us, something to this effect: 'If 'twere done, then 'tis well 'twere done quickly.' And so say I, that the sooner it's done the better for all of us. And that's what I told Adam."

The old man replied in low, cautious tones, "An' I tell ye, Captain Rathborn, as I told Adam, to remember there's to be no bloodshed 'bout it; an' so, I wash my hands o' the whole affair."

The Captain turned about and came up the step again, as he said in a voice full of anger,



“Wash your hands of it, do ye? See here, ye’re not softening towards that d——d rascal, are ye? Ye’re not going back on your promise to me about Betty, eh? By the Lord! Ye do, and I’ll have the King’s officers lay ye by the heels for the bloody old smuggler that ye are, and so quickly, too, that ye won’t know whether your name be Peach or Devil,—which last I’m often in two minds about.”

The old man’s evil eyes glittered, and there was a quivering of the long, bony fingers silhouetted against the flame, as he replied, in a voice choked with rage, “Any softening I have for Dan Marr will never do him good; an’ for the wench, ye are welcome to her.”

“Spoken like a man and a gentleman, which ye are—not,” hiccoughed the other; and he turned away with a maudlin laugh, saying, “Good night to ye, old Skinflint; and ye can rely upon Bob Rathborn never showing ye up in your true light, so long as ye furnish his throat with such spirits, smuggled though it be, and his eyes with such sweet baggage as Mistress Betty.”

Trembling with anger, disgust and terror, poor little Betty scarcely breathed until her Grand-



father closed and barred the door, and the Captain's uncertain footfall had died away down the roadway. Then, waiting until she saw the light extinguished in the old man's room, and so being assured of his having retired for the night, she stole softly around to the other side of the house, until she stood beneath the window of her own room. Here a stout apricot tree, growing vine-like, was to serve her, as it had many times before, for a ladder. Throwing her heavy cloak to the ground, she climbed into the tree and made her way noiselessly up through the branches, and so, by way of the window, into her chamber.

And now, not daring to make a light, she felt her way quietly across the hall to Billy's room, the door of which stood wide open. By the pale light coming in at the foot of the bed, she saw the boy was there, and with a soft "Hush-sh-h," she closed the door and seated herself beside him.

"Billy," she whispered, "Ye're awake, aren't ye?"

"Yes," the boy replied, and there was little sign of drowsiness in his tone.

"Have ye seen Dan?" Betty asked, anxiously.



"Oh, Betty?" he exclaimed so impetuously that the girl uttered another "Hush!" and pressed her little hand over his lips. At this, he sank his voice, and continued, "I went to find him, but could not anywheres, though I went to every place I could think o'. At last I met Dick Hadley, an' he told me Dan had been at the Pine Tree, when the nigger boy from Master Harris' came an' told him Nancy was waiting to speak to him o' a cargo her father had told on afore he went up to Boston yester'een; an' so I went past Master Harris' place to wait for Dan to come out. But I only saw the nigger boy, an' he told me Dan had not been to the house."

At the mention of Nancy's name, Betty felt her heart harden for a second; then she bravely put the jealous feeling aside, as she reminded herself of Dan's danger. Again she seemed to see his face and hear his voice, as it had been that late afternoon, when, down on the shore, he had called her his "little maid;" so she asked calmly, "Be that all, Billy?"

"Yes, that be all," was the reply, uttered in a tone of despondency. Then the boy added, "Whatever shall we do, Bett, how can we do something to help Dan?"



"I know," the girl answered, with assuring decision sounding in her soft tones. "Do ye get up and dress ; put on your warmest coat. An' then we will climb out my window, an' down the old apricot tree ; an' when we get safe out o' doors, I'll tell ye all 'bout it."

Perfectly familiar with this method of egress and ingress, and accustomed to follow Betty's lead in everything, Billy arose and dressed himself ; and then they both climbed through the window, and so down to the ground. There the girl wrapped herself once more in her warm dark cloak, and the two, clasping hands, stole softly away under the rustling orchard trees, the stars shining down upon them like kindly eyes, and no sound to be heard save now and then the moan and washing of the sea.

Neither spoke until they had climbed over the wall, and were trudging, with closely clasped hands, along the highway.

"Where be we going, Bett?" Billy now asked ; and he still whispered, as if in fear of waking their dreaded Grandfather.

"To Nursey's," she answered, also in a whisper.

"What for?" the boy asked.



"Never mind now, Billy," was the reply. "I be sure I am knowing what to do ; an' I want ye with me, I'll feel safer."

Poor little Billy glowed all over at this, and clasped her hand still closer.

"An' we best not talk," Betty added. "Some might hear us, ye know. An' t'would not be any good person ; for 'tis so late, all good folk be abed this hour or more."

The boy's clasp tightened at this, and he glanced about a bit apprehensively.

In a minute or two Betty spoke again. "Now do ye be careful, Billy," she said, "that ye keep quiet, no matter what ye see, or what happens. I be sure we can help Dan, an' there be harm threatening him."

Her little heart was meanwhile throbbing with dread of the darkness and intense stillness ; a dread of she knew not what. And her surroundings were not such as to inspire courage in the heart of a girl of her tender years. Far to the west lowered the wooded hills, merged by the night into a compact blackness, until they resembled great crouching beasts, save where the glitter of the stars indicated the branches of the trees. From the base of the hills, the cultivated



fields ran to meet the road along which these two brave young hearts trod ; with here and there, dotted far apart, small and roughly made dwellings, whose inmates had, for most part, retired long since. Once a watchful dog lifted up his voice as they passed, and now and again the crowing of a cock sounded cheerily, echoed as it was at times by others further away.

" Betty," whispered Billy, after a time, as he lifted his white face to the stars, " Don't ye believe our mothers an' fathers be watching us up there ? "

" Yes, Billy," the girl answered softly, as she looked into the heavens.

" An' don't ye remember," the boy continued, and there was a strange solemnity in his childish voice, " How ' the morning stars sang together ? ' An' shouldn't ye think they would sing, an' they know we be going to keep Dan from hurt ? "

" Hush, Billy," she whispered, warningly. " Ye said ye would keep quiet."

Presently they left the road, and turning to the left, with their faces to the sea, began making their way to the narrow peninsula which ran out into the harbor, and had, upon its extreme point, a mountainous pale of rock. Perched upon this



was the lighthouse, its feeble spark the only light showing in all the dense blackness.

Ben Hope, the keeper, had, some years before, married Meg, the former housekeeper of Squire Peach ; and a motherly caretender she had always been of the orphans. She had left the Squire's service reluctantly, with many tears, shed solely on account of her love for the children. Again and again did she adjure old Cata to be good to them, emphasizing her behests with as much earnestness and solemnity as though she were at the point of death, rather than of matrimony.

Then she had gone to live at the lighthouse with Ben, taking with her Bijah, her old and crippled brother, who, not being able to care for himself, had been tendered a home by her good hearted husband ; and the two of them, Meg and her brother, attended to the light, and performed many other of Ben's duties, so leaving him to spend much of his time upon the water.

Besides this, the good woman kept sufficient hens to supply eggs for the Squire's table ; and by many little attentions and duties still maintained, in a way, her position with her former charges, and was to them as she had ever been,



their comforter and counselor. No matter whether they were wrong or right, the orphans were always sure of "Nurse" taking their part, and making their cause her own; and many a time had she, by her own peculiar devices, kept from them the consequences of the old Squire's anger.

Betty and her companion had just reached the shore, when the girl thought she heard voices not far away, and paused to listen, while Billy's fingers clasped her own all the more closely, as he stood, scarcely daring to breathe, beside her.

In a few moments Betty was able to discern something coming toward them, and moving slowly, in a clumsy, lumbering fashion, a dark mass, whose outlines she could not distinguish.

"I see something coming this way, Billy," she whispered to the boy. "Quick, let's hide," and grasping his arm, she drew him behind a clump of rocks and thickly matted bushes, which stood up just where the peninsula left the shore line. Looking from behind their shelter, they saw a strange thing,—two men, who bore between them what appeared to be a long, dark bundle of some sort, like a bale of goods. They passed slowly along, and went down to the shore, where they



stopped, and laid it down upon the sand, near a large, clumsy rowboat that lay there beached. This they soon pushed to the water's edge, then returning for their burden, they lifted it by the ends, and swung it into the boat.

Neither of the men had spoken, until one of them having gotten into the boat, the other was about to follow him, when the coarse voice of Adam Powers fell upon the girl's ear, as he said to his companion, "Easy, Peter, easy, man. Don't ye set them iron-shod heels o' ye'rn on his pretty carcass, ye know old master said an' there was to be no red wine spilled."

Peter Trower had evidently been drinking heavily, for he stumbled into the craft with a volley of oaths, interspersed with remarks not very complimentary to the "old master," and adding, as he picked up his oar, "'Tis the Captain pays best for this job, not that cursed old bloodsucker, Peach, who gives us all dirty work, an' pockets the fine pickings for his d——d old self."

As these words came clearly to their ears, Billy clutched Betty frantically, and she, fearful that he would make an outcry, caught him with a fierceness of which she was not mindful at the



moment, and wrapping her cloak in smothering folds about his head and face, held him close until the boat had pushed off and was swallowed up in the darkness.

"Oh, Bett! they've got Dan!" Billy gasped in a low voice, as he struggled out from the folds of the thick cloak. The girl made no reply, but arising from her cramped position, she grasped the boy's hand, almost dragging him with her, as she started to run towards the lighthouse. In a moment, however, she stopped short.

"Hold, Billy," she said quickly, "We must not run. They might see—might hear us. We must make no noise. Listen, Billy."

With their hearts beating so hard as to make the pulses sound in their ears, they stood waiting, listening to assure themselves that their footfalls had not reached the ears of those in the boat; but not a sound came to them save the lapping waves along the beach.

Then, and as if to reassure them, Peter Trower's voice was raised in song, and be it understood, Peter's voice was one compounded of noise, rather than melody.

"Room, boys, room, by the light o' the moon;  
Let every man enjoy his own room."



At this point he was silenced abruptly, as though Adam had laid a strong hand over his too tuneful lips.

Then, assured of not having been observed, the boy and girl, with clasped hands, again sped onward.

A low, rambling, one-storied building adjoined the lighthouse, and in it were three rooms, one of them being Meg's sleeping room. To one of the windows of this Betty went, instead of to the door, for Ben was away for the night with the herring boats, as she had ascertained during her visit the previous afternoon.

Tapping hurriedly upon the small pane, the girl soon brought Meg to the window, and in a few moments she and Billy were in the old, low-raftered kitchen and living room, where the feeble candle light revealed to the startled Meg their trembling forms and pallid faces.

"Whatever can be amiss?" she exclaimed in frightened tones. Billy began to cry, and she continued wildly, "Does Squire be sick—dead? Or be the house afire? Whatever has befallen?"

In rapid, faltering tones, Betty made the good soul acquainted with the facts, adding that she had come with the thought to get Meg to go to



Widow Barway's, where Dan always lived when ashore, and put him on his guard against the plot which had been hatched for his injury. And then, having told her story, the poor child broke down, and gave way to a burst of tears.

Meg was a shrewd soul and always kept herself well informed as to the "goings on" of those about her. And now she sat with lowering brows, staring about the room for so long a time that Betty ceased weeping and looked at her inquiringly, feeling sure that her old nurse was seeing some way out of the tangle.

Billy, too, who had with childish sympathy, leaned his head against the girl's knees as he crouched on the floor, stared up into Meg's face with expectant eyes and parted lips.

"Oh, Nursey," Betty exclaimed with piteous eagerness, "Are ye thinking it out, what we can do?" Where do ye think Adam an' Peter be taking Dan? Ye don't think Dan was——," and she stopped with a shudder, leaving the awful word unsaid.

Meg's eyes came back from their gazing, as she answered quite cheerily, "Not a bit o' it, my lamb. Master Dan be no more dead than ye an' I be. They would not quite do that, the rascals,



for they know that he be too much loved hereabouts, for such matter to go unpunished. What I think be this: 'They caught an' gagged him, an' now Adam an' Peter will take him off to ——. Ever been on Gull Rock, my lamb?'"

"No," Betty answered, with wonder showing in her eyes.

"I suppose not; an' neither have I, nor many others, I wot," Meg said, rather irrelevantly. Then rising, as though struck by a new thought, she continued, "Now, Billy, my lamb, Nursey's got a piece o' that nice meat pie ye're so fond o', an' I will put it on the table for ye, an' a glass o' weak drink. Ye must eat it all up, so ye get no illness from the damps this hour o' the night. An' Betty, my poppet, won't ye take a sup, too? Else I fear ye'll be ill."

But Betty shook her pretty, curly head and tried to seem patient, for she well knew Meg's peculiar ways. But the good soul quietly poured out an extra glass of the liquor and held it to the girl's lips, saying coaxingly, "Now, do ye drink this, my poppet; then I have somewhat in next room I want ye to see 'bout, while Billy eats his supper here."

Betty satisfied her by taking a few swallows,



making a wry face as the warming liquid went down her white throat. And now the boy, with the easy-to-be-diverted mind of childhood, and, in his case, emphasized by his mental affliction, had drawn a chair to the table and began, nothing loath, to eat as Meg had bidden. Seeing him thus engaged, the good woman now lighted another candle, and motioning Betty to follow, led the way into her bedroom, closing the door softly behind them.

"Now, my poppet," she began, "I don't dare trust the lad with what I want to tell ye; an' the men knew Ben had ever told me o' Gull Rock, some would have the place 'bout our ears, or worse, mayhap; so ye must never breath what I tell ye. Gull Rock, for most folk, be but a fearsome pile o' rocks, with a bit o' green on it, three miles out to sea. But there be caves there, my lamb, where the smugglers oft-times hide the cargoes. An' that's where the sons o' Beelzebub have, for a surety, taken Dan; an' mayhap it's to leave him there to starve, or, more like, till they be able to get him further away. Now no harm can befall before another night, for there do be no big ships in harbor, to bribe for the carrying him off. An' a brave, stout



lad like Master Dan can surely go more than the one day an' night with lack o' food, an' no great harm. Now, do ye and Billy go home, my poppet, an' go to sleep. To-morrow, come over an' see old Nursey; she will have a fine plan ready. Ben will help us, ye can be sure."

Betty's black eyes began to sparkle again, and her face get back it's sweet color. "Oh, Meg," she exclaimed, "are ye sure, *sure* it will be as ye say?"

"Preachin' sure, my poppet," the woman said, with firm conviction sounding in her voice. "Preachin' sure. So, don't ye worry. I'll go back with ye far as the Squire's wall, else I'd not be like to sleep again."

They then returned to the larger room, and here they found plate and glass emptied, and Billy all but asleep in his chair.

It was not long before the three were upon their way, Meg taking the precaution before starting to light the clumsy horn lantern she always carried when abroad after dark, partially concealing its glow in the folds of her voluminous red cloak.

And so, she and her precious charges set out upon the homeward road.



### CHAPTER III.

When old Cata awakened Betty the next morning, the girl had little inclination to arise, but, snuggling down among the rosemary and lavender scented linen, she lay, half dreaming, until the thought of Dan came to her, a sharp flash of painful reminding, and, with tremulous haste, she sprang from her bed and dressed as rapidly as she could. Then she glanced into Billy's room, and seeing that the boy still slept heavily, deemed it wiser to leave him to his slumber; so, without disturbing him, she went down to the dining room, where Squire Peach was already eating his porridge, his face sour enough in its expression to have affected the cream he poured into his bowl.

He vouchsafed no reply to the girl's timid salutation, but ate his frugal meal in stolid silence, eyeing her askance now and then. But when breakfast was over, he snapped out, "Come to



my room, Mistress; I've somewhat for ye to harken to."

Trembling, but inwardly defiant, she followed him. He closed the door after them, and poor little Betty began to feel as though a great bear had her safely in his den. But she leaned easily against the massive table in the center of the littered room, her small fingers gripping its mahogany edge, as her hands rested upon it, and her little feet, which her short blue gown left well displayed in their small, black, steel-buckled shoes, set firmly and close together upon the polished floor. And a sweet, dainty picture the girl presented, as with downcast eyes, she stood before her Grandfather, awaiting his pleasure.

But the hard-hearted, selfish old man had no softness or love for her girlish tenderness and beauty. He sat there in his great armchair, with an expression every whit as hard as the oaken arms and back of its seat. Indeed, if he thought of her beauty at all, it was as personal merchandise, which should bring him, its owner and master, that which was the only thing his hard old heart cared for,—gold!

Betty was indeed a neglected flower; a tender creature, growing up unheeded and unloved by



him who should have been her chief counselor and defender. But to him she had been little other than an incumbrance, the unwished-for offspring of his only son's wilful marriage with a girl whose only fault (but in his eyes, an unpardonable sin) was poverty. It was therefore small wonder that Betty should pay little heed to his wishes or commands.

The old man sat silently puffing his long clay pipe, black with constant use, and for several seconds eyed the girl stonily; and then his anger found voice.

"Haven't I forbidden ye converse o' any sort, Mistress, with that ne'er-do-well, Daniel Marr?" he demanded, in his harshest tone.

Betty looked at him, and an expression of determination began to manifest itself about the soft lines of her sweet mouth; but she made no answer to his question. Indeed she had little opportunity to respond, for the old man continued, scarcely pausing, "Ye know well that I did, ye good for nothing baggage. An' yester'een ye were on the beach with the scapegrace. Had ye seen him before?"

"No, sir," she answered quietly, and again looked down. And the old man knew she was



telling the truth, for she was one in whose word he had always been able to place implicit reliance.

"Have ye seen him since? Look up ye huzzy, answer me that, an' give me truth."

Betty looked up, with a flash in her soft eyes; and hesitated. But before she could frame her answer, the old man spoke again.

"Answer me;" he thundered. "Answer me, or—" and he raised his arm threateningly.

The girl did not flinch nor shrink, but said, quietly, "Ye can strike me, Grand'ther, an' ye like, all I can tell ye is—no!" This was all, but it was enough; the old man's arm fell, and he looked a bit bewildered.

"Are ye lying to me?" he demanded, leaning forward to peer at her more closely. She met the gaze of his hard eyes unflinchingly, as she replied in measured syllables, "I've not spoken with Dan but the once, an' ye saw me down on the beach."

The Squire fell back in his chair, and for a second or so he puffed vigorously at his pipe. Then he asked, sharply, "What were ye talking o' then, eh?" Betty's eyes again sought the floor, and she blushed.



The old man quickly noted this, and his face grew more hard and evil than before.

“Hark ye,” he thundered. “I’ll make ye rue the day an’ ye had ever love making with Dan Marr! Mark ye that well! An’ mark this, as well! The next time ye see Captain Rathborn, he will ask ye to marry. An’ marry him ye will, or——” and again he lifted his arm, but lowered it again as he shouted, “Now go,—get out o’ my sight; but see to it ye do as I bid, an’ ye know what’s the best for ye!”

Betty, making no reply to these cruel words, hastened to escape from his presence and gain her own room. Once here, she locked herself in, and then gave way to the strain which the events of the past four and twenty hours had imposed upon her; throwing herself upon the bed, she wept long and bitterly.

But, for all this, she was brave and her courage did not forsake her. She felt there was too much at stake, both for her sake and that of her lover.

So, after a time, the rain of tears was hushed back, and with a new look of dogged determination showing about the soft, round jaw, she arose and bathed her face and eyes; then, hearing Bil-



ly moving about his room, she went in to him.

She surmised that the boy's own sense of fear would prove an effectual seal upon his lips regarding the events of the night before ; but that there might be no question as to this, she said to him, " Billy, ye must not forget we be to let no one — no one think we know aught o' Dan. An' we do, Grand'ther would lock us up ; an' I don't know what he might not do to us."

Billy looked scared, and glanced with apprehension toward the closed door.

" An' Billy," she added, " after Cata gives ye somewhat to eat, do ye go up to the Pine Tree an' see an' hear whatever ye can. Mind, an' ye talk to no one, but look an' listen with all your eyes an' ears. I will go an' see Nursey for a bit."

" Does Nursey be going to know how to find Dan, an' hide him safe ? " And there was a sparkle of unwonted cunning in the boy's blue eyes.

" Yes," Betty replied, very gravely, " An ye be sure and careful to talk with none. An' ye begin to talk, ye may spoil all o' Nursey's plans, an' then ye would be the death o' Dan."

" Never ye fear, Bett," he replied, firmly. " Adam couldn't drag one word out o' me, nor



shall any o' the rest." And with this he started for the door. But the girl's quick eye taking in his disordered appearance, she called him back. "Oh, Billy," she said, "Look at ye hair! Ye shall not go out looking so."

"What's amiss, Bett? — I've brushed it."

"In front, mayhap," she said, unable to repress a smile. "But the back looks like the crow's nest we found last week, up in the woods on Gally's Hill." And seizing the brush from the dressing table, she smoothed his long, soft locks with a motherly care. Then, bending, she kissed his cheek lightly, saying, "There! 'tis all proper. Now go, Billy; remember, have great care as to what ye say."

The boy made no reply to this parting injunction, but clattered down the stairs at breakneck speed, and Betty, equipping herself, set out for the lighthouse.

Old Bijah was chopping firewood from the pile of wreckage in front of the door, and Meg was bustling about within, when the girl arrived, her face showing like a wild rose from beneath the hood of her dark cloak.

"Bless ye'r pretty face, Mistress," said the old cripple, pausing from his labors. "Yes, ye'll



find Meg within," and he bent his faded, kindly little eyes upon her with admiring approval.

Meg's harsh voice, raised in song, was stilled abruptly at sight of her favorite, and beckoning to her, she led the way at once to her own room. Betty followed without a word spoken, and the door was closed behind them.

All about, the sea stretched, sparkling, in hue like a dark purple pansy, with here and there, near shore, flickerings of foam that, catching the sun's rays, sparkled like jewels set in lace. Over it arched the sky, like an inverted pansy of paler tint, with not a cloud to fleck its violet.

The small window, looking out upon this, was wide open, and the breeze coming in, floated out the muslin curtains on either side, like ghostly draperies.

Before Meg had an opportunity to speak, Betty, chancing to glance through the window, her keen young eyes spied the sails of two large craft upon the far-off horizon.

"Oh, Meg, look!" she exclaimed, pointing to the sea.

"What, where, my precious? Oh, the sails! What o' it?" Meg's tone and manner seemed unconcerned.



"May they not be ships coming into our harbor?" the girl asked, with some anxiety in her voice.

"An' what an' they be? Fishing boats, belike, coming in to sell their catch, or mayhap gentry from Boston, coming down for an extra fine cargo o' fish, such as all folk know we ofttimes have ready for them here." But the good woman got her glass, and tried to spy out more minutely, the appearance of the far-away sails; for, despite her matter-of-fact tone, she felt a bit uneasy.

Presently she said, laying her glass aside, "They be too far off yet to see much, so never ye mind them now, my lamb, but sit down here on my bed. I'll sit here." And she drew up a stiff, high-backed chair alongside the bed, upon whose side she had gently, but firmly, placed the young girl. Then, seating herself, she took one of Betty's little hands in her own, and stroking it gently, said, "Now list ye, my lamb. I've told Ben all 'bout it, an' he thinks much as I do. Now, when dark falls, he will take his sailboat an' run down to Gull Rock, to see whether or no, the cutthroats have tethered Master Dan in the caves there. An' he finds it be so, he'll have the lad off in a trice, an' will bring him back



here. Then we can stow him away safe in the loft o'head ; after that there'll be plenty o' time to think out what be to come next."

"What time does Ben think to start, Meg?" Betty asked, with some anxiety.

"Eight o' the clock, or thereabouts, my lamb ; ye see 'twould not do to go while 'tis daylight. Master Dan must be got off afore the wrong ones get there again. Adam, or other of his ilk, may or may not go over to-night. An, they do, ye can be sure 'twill be after all good folk be sound asleep."

"Nursey," Betty said, quietly, "I'll go with Ben ; an' ye bid him wait for me."

"Ye, my pretty?" exclaimed the old woman, in a tone of amazement. But Betty got hold of her two hard hands in her own soft little ones and patted them coaxingly.

"Why not, Nursey, why not?" she pleaded. "I love Dan dearly, he loves me ; an'—an'—Oh, Meg, I *must* go with Ben!"

"Well, then,—there, ye shall do just an' ye please, my lamb. I knew long since how 'twas with Master Dan an' ye." And the good woman leaned forward, and taking the sweet young face between her hands, she kissed it lovingly.



Meanwhile, as Meg and Mistress Betty were thus conferring, there was going on, in a remote part of the village, another consultation, of a somewhat different nature, albeit pertaining in part to the same subject of interest.

In a private room at the Pine Tree Inn, Squire Peach and Captain Rathborn sat together. The former was examining a written paper the Captain had given him for perusal, and a candle and wax were on the table in readiness for the package to be sealed when the old man should have finished reading the document, which was of some length.

The Captain sat opposite, drinking, and, as was his habit, taking three glasses to the Squire's one, pouring the liquor from the bottle which stood upon the table. His face was fast assuming its usual ruddy hue, due to the frequent potations in which he was indulging, and this was the more accentuated by contrast with his carefully powdered hair, done up in an elaborate queue.

He was saying to the Squire, "Ye see, old Skinflint, as ye are ever ready to suspect false play, I thought it best to have ye read, with those fine eyes of yours (Old Nick save the mark!) the list of the cargo that ye say is to be



mine. An' then we'll seal it here under your nose, Larry will take it to the wharf this noon, where he'll find Adam. I've already given that cutthroat his instructions, so he'll load his craft with the casks to-night; and up sail for Boston, where he is to wait for me in a place only he an' I are to know of, an' ye please."

"Ahem," said the other, stroking his chin, and gazing fixedly at the debonair countenance of the captain.

"Well, what is it? Doesn't the list correspond with what ye said?"

"Oh, yes, yes, 'tis quite correct," answered the old man, who, having finished reading, had now laid the paper on the table.

The other snatched it up, and after folding it, proceeded to seal it.

"Be Adam going alone?" inquired the Squire, watching the movements of his companion's white slim hands, as though suspicious of their power to put something more within the paper, as unlawful property.

"Alone? No; Peter Trower will go along; those two seem alway to be found in the same boat. A sweet pair they will make for the hangman. Oh! By ——!" The Captain inter-



rupted himself with a loud, fierce oath, a drop of the burning wax having fallen upon his carefully kept fingers.

"Does ye man know Adam?" asked the Squire, after a silence, in which the doughty Captain was sucking at his injured finger, and examining it as anxiously as might some vain belle.

"Know him? D—n that wax! Know him, say you? Why, no, he don't, so far an' I know; but Larry's no fool, and he can easy enough find him."

"There be no names on the paper," the old man continued, "only the listed articles. So, an' wrong persons get hold o' it 'twould tell naught. Only, to be sure, there be the place mentioned where they may be found—the Pigeon's Store-away;—that might be awkward in wrongful hands."

"Hark ye, old Skinflint, what be the use in your imaginings? Ye are like the heathen, in that ye 'imagine a vain thing.' In my opinion ye're regretting giving me the liquor at all, an' trying to think on some way to get it back."

"Ye should drink less, Captain Rathborn; liquor seems to make ye quarrelsome." The old



man said this with something like dignity in his impassive face and grave, low tone.

The other laughed scornfully. "I'll own to your being the prince of smugglers, and a stony-hearted parent, willing to sell your own flesh and blood; but your preaching will not go down with Bob Rathborn. He knows ye too well for that, old Skinflint, so just quit it, I tell ye!" Here the Captain pounded on the table so lustily that the glasses jingled. In response to the thumping Landlord Robey came in from the outer room, closing the door quickly after him, and standing with his back against it.

"Where's Larry, my man?" Captain Rathborn asked, turning toward him.

"He be out in the yard, sir, or was a minute ago."

"Well, just ye hunt him up, Robey; I want him in a hurry," and as the landlord went out, the Captain continued in a lower tone than usual, "We got the job done up an' I told ye, all safe, and ——"

The old man interrupted him coldly, "An' I tell ye, sirrah, that matter be naught to me," but his wicked eyes showed a gratified malice, which was not lost upon the other, who had



been watching him keenly, and who now burst out in a fury, "Naught to ye, ye old liar? I know better! Ye wash your hands of it, so ye said last night. But ye have as much to do with Dan Marr being carried off, as I have."

"Sh-h-h!" hissed the other, warningly, and clinching one of his claw-like hands as though to resist the temptation to strike the younger man, who sank his tone, but continued, as fiercely as before, "Who knows better than I, an' Dan Marr chose, he could tell of some deeds that would be harder for ye to answer to than smuggling? All I wanted him out the way for was that he was in the road to my game with sweet Mistress Betty. 'Twas that ye feared his tongue tripping, that made ye want to lock him away. Now I half suspect ye of a notion of never letting him off from where he is. But let me tell ye that I'll be down this way again before long, an' I find ye mean murder, I'll inform on ye myself, or my name's not Bob Rathborn. I want Betty, and no other man shall have her; but by ——, I'll not have my name tangled up in the taking of that fellow's life. So mind ye that!"



Squire Peach cast an evil look at the other, vouchsafing no reply. Presently, and in a more amiable tone, Captain Rathborn continued, "An' ye agree to it, I am to carry sweet Mistress Betty off in my coach the night, to make her Mistress Rathborn in Boston, whether she will say me yea or nay?"

"I've answered ye that," replied the old man sulkily, as he filled his glass. Just here came a knocking at the door again, and the Captain calling out facetiously, "Entrez Out," it opened, and a bullet-headed, stupid-faced Irishman came in. It was Larry, and he was apparently somewhat the worse for liquor.

This fact appeared in no wise to disturb his master; probably for the reason that he was quite accustomed to seeing the fellow in that condition. So picking up the sealed packet from the table, Captain Rathborn held it toward him, saying "Do ye take that, and be careful of it, — very. Go down to the wharf, find Adam Powers and give it him. Mind ye say nothing but 'Here's your orders,' and give him the packet; that's all."

Larry rubbed his head a little perplexedly. "How'll I ever know him?"



“Ask another, ye d——d muddlehead ; ask !”

“All right, thin, sorr,” said the Irishman, too well drilled to question further, and too conceited as to his own cunning to make further display of his utter ignorance as to whom Adam Powers might be.

When outside, he tarried for a few more drinks, which only served to befuddle him still further, and then he started upon his mission. In the yard he met one of the maids and stopped to renew an old flirtation ; so that an hour later, as he sat on the timbers of the old wharf, the combined action of the liquor and the sun, together with the soothing sound of the lapping water, put him into so deep a slumber that he was not awakened by the hurrying feet about him of several folk whose curiosity had drawn them thither to see who should come ashore from the two recently arrived ships.

One of the soldiers, who had just landed, seeing and recognizing Larry, paused for a moment ; then stooping, he shook him violently by the shoulder, calling him by name.

“Eh, eh ?” queried the intoxicated Irishman, partially opening his eyes.



"Ye drunken dog!" exclaimed the soldier, "Where's the Captain?"

"Captain?" was the hiccoughed answer, "Captain? Oh, yes, I know. Here, here," he fumbled in his pocket, and finally producing the packet, he thrust it upon the other, saying, "Here's your orders," and fell back again, with a heavy, long drawn breath that bespoke a renewal of his interrupted slumber.

"My orders, eh," muttered the soldier, examining the packet, which bore no inscription; "Let's see them," and he tore it open, glancing with a bewildered look over the writing inside, which, as Captain Rathborn had written it the night before, was decidedly scrawling.

A number of the young soldiers had now gathered about him, and, glancing at the sleeping Irishman, one of them exclaimed, "Why, it's Larry!" and another asked what the paper was.

"That drunken Paddy, there, gave it me, and said 'twas my orders; but I'm blessed an' I can make it out."

"Make it out?" said another of them sharply; "I should say ye'd no call to make it out. That paper goes to the Ensign."

"That's true, after all," said the other.



Meanwhile a burly, broad shouldered man in seaman's clothing was hanging about the group ; and without attracting attention he had glanced curiously over the soldier's shoulder at the paper while the other was trying to decipher it. As he did so, he scowled murderously at the sleeping Larry, and turning, went straight to the Pine Tree, where already many of the soldiers were,—some inside, but the most of them without, laughing and talking with the village folk gathering there.

Adam Powers,—for he it was,—found Robey drawing liquor from a cask, for some of his thirsty guests. He stooped, as though to examine the fluid pouring into the huge earthen pitcher the landlord held, and whispered, "Where's Captain?"

Robey made a motion with his head. Hanging about in an uncertain fashion for awhile, Adam asked, so that all could hear, "Where's be the Missus? I've to see her 'bout sum'mut."

Robey jerked his thumb suggestively over his shoulder. Following the direction indicated, Adam went into the room where Squire Peach and Captain Rathborn had been, closing the door after him. The emptied bottle and glasses still



stood upon the table, but the former occupants had departed, which seemed to be quite as Adam had expected. Crossing the room, he listened a moment; then, opening a slide, in what appeared to be solid oak paneling, he passed through, and closed it noiselessly after him. He evidently was well acquainted with the premises, for he moved a few feet forward and then, stooping, felt about until he found the iron ring he was groping for. Lifting this, a flight of steps, wooden at the top, and hewn roughly, in fact a mere pathway at the bottom, showed in a dim light coming from some crevice in the rocks overhead, that arched out a grim vaulting over a narrow, winding passage. Stumbling along this, as if in great haste, Adam came at last to an opening, where, beyond, a circular cavern ended the way. In this were piled portions of various smuggled cargoes; and in the furthest corner, upon some of the debris, were seated the two men he sought. There was seemingly no other opening to the place than along the way Adam had come, although the sound of the sea, washing on the rocks without, could be heard.

At sight of him the two men ceased their converse, and looked up inquiringly.



"Did ye send that fool Irishman to me, Captain, with that paper ye said was to be the sign, an' my orders?"

"To be sure I did. What's the matter, that ye don't understand?"

"The matter be, some wrong parties 'don't understand;' an' they may, better'n we want they should, afore night."

The Captain sprang to his feet. "What be ye saying?" he exclaimed.

"Sayin' there be two ship loads o' red coats landed in harbor, an' many o' 'em be up in the Pine Tree this minute. That d—d Irishman lyin' drunk on the wharf, gave yer paper to one o' them that come ashore."

A wicked oath escaped the Captain, and the Squire sprang to his feet with another. The old man's glittering eyes turned on his younger companion's face, and his lips parted as though to speak; but seeming upon second thoughts to change his mind, he remained silent.

Captain Rathborn pondered for a few minutes. Then looking up, he said, in a somewhat relieved tone, "An' Larry's drunk, he can explain naught. I'll see to it he be put away safely, so that when he be himself, he'll explain the way we wish



him to. No one can say to whom the paper belongs, or who sent it. As for 'The Pigeons,' " waving his hand about him, and laughing, " 'They'd have to look a long time about them to find it. Do you see Peter an' warn him, Adam. Have the craft all ready to sail with whatever cargo turns up for the best, this night. 'Tis all as well we have Dan Marr out the way. I'll see to it that all concerned be warned in time, an' there be need to fear trouble."

Adam listened in sullen silence, and then, as the Captain made an end of speaking, he began to move aside sundry large bales that had been piled before a low opening, either natural, or hewn out of the rocks. Through this he disappeared, saying, " We'll wait all day, Captain, Peter an' me, at the Chasm."

" An' now what do ye purpose doing, Captain Rathborn," asked Squire Peach, when Adam had gone.

" See to Larry, first. Then I must see Mistress Harris, an' make sure she says naught she should not. Shall I find ye in your own house? "

" No," the Squire answered, not very cordially. " I'll be at the Chasm 'till late, with Adam na'



Peter. An' we hear naught from ye by dark, I'll go home."

Then the two men followed the way Adam had taken, coming out upon the shore in the midst of a huge rock pile, far from the village. Before them lay the sea, sparkling in the afternoon sunshine, and anchored a few yards from the shore lay the rakish little bark "Rambler," of which Adam was captain and part owner. It was one of several similar crafts in which Squire Peach was interested, and used by him in his many nefarious enterprises.

The old Squire now took his way alone, up and along the beach, which led him still farther from the village ; while Captain Rathborn turned inland, and went across the fields, where, save himself, no moving thing was in sight.



## CHAPTER IV.

A spirit of unrest possessed Betty that day, and in the afternoon she determined to call upon Nancy Harris, and, if possible, satisfy herself as to a certain thought which had been troubling her. The recollection of what Billy had told her the night before, how that Nancy had sent word to Dan to come to the house, had set her wondering if Nancy could have had any hand in the abduction of her lover.

It looked as though Dan had been waylaid while going to the Harris house, unless the darkey boy had been mistaken in telling Billy that he had not been there ; and she well knew Nancy to be of a nature quite capable of ruining, where she could not rule. The two girls had been rival belles since their childhood, and many were the spiteful, ill-natured tricks that Betty had to remember of the other's jealousy and vindictiveness.



She now recalled the fact of her having passed down the road the previous afternoon, while she and Dan stood talking by the boat on the beach. And she remembered also, that more than once, Captain Rathborn, as if to pique her into more kindliness of manner towards himself, had boasted of the other girl's favors of which he was the recipient.

These facts came to her mind now, and with a strange suggestiveness ; and, as already said, she determined to ascertain, if she could, what connection they had with the fate of Dan Marr.

Just as she was setting forth, she encountered Billy, who, earlier in the day, had reported to her his failure to learn anything new, Dan's absence not seeming to have been noticed by his fellows ; or, if it was, not deemed worthy of special remark.

Now the boy burst forth excitedly with, " Oh, Bett? There be two new ships in harbor, an' many soldiers o' the King's. An' I saw a fine lady at Inn, who came with them, all in silk, an' grand gold earrings, an' a chain o' gold 'round her neck ; an' such big black eyes, that shone as Grand'ther's do when he beats me. I think she be angered at some one or somewhat."



"Who be she?" Betty asked, without manifesting very much interest.

"I know not," the boy replied. "No one knows. The soldiers be here for no harm, I think, for they be drinking an' laughing with the men up at the Pine Tree; an' one o' them was saying they wanted to have speech with Captain Rathborn, but no one can say where he may be found."

"Was Grand'ther at the Pine Tree?" Betty asked, beginning to feel a bit excited over all this unusual stir.

"I cannot say; I did not see him," Billy answered. "Where be ye going, Betty?"

"To Nancy Harris' house, for awhile."

"To tell her o' the grand lady, an' the soldiers?" the boy asked, with a smile.

"Mayhaps," Betty said. "But do ye bide here, like a good boy. I'll not be gone long."

"Hurry back, Bett, for I want to show ye a new rabbit Dick Hadley caught me in his trap this morning."

"I'll see it when I come home; I'll not be long gone," she said to him over her shoulder, and walked quickly away.

Taking the path across the fields, to avoid the



Pine Tree, as well as the soldiers, Betty was about half way over when she found that a small pebble, or other painful intruder, had gotten into her low shoe ; and being now a safe distance from the more thickly populated part of the village, she went close up to the road, and sitting down on the grass, proceeded to divest herself of her dainty footgear.

She found inside, a small, sharp pebble ; this she removed, and was retying the lace, when, happening to glance sidewise, she saw Nancy herself coming down the road toward her, and with her was Captain Rathborn. They seemed be in earnest conversation, and the Captain held one of the girl's hands as they strolled along. Neither of them had as yet seen the small figure by the wayside before them.

Setting her little white teeth hard, Betty arose, and stood waiting until they should come to meet her.

Engrossed as they were with each other, they were quite close to Betty before either of them saw her. The man flushed, and dropped Nancy's hand, but that young lady's pale blue eyes stared boldly as ever, and she giggled and tossed her head, and the color in her pretty, albeit doll-like face, never changed by a shade.



“Why, Betty,” she said, with a simper, “Who’d ever thought to meet ye here, an’ all by yourself, too?”

“I was on my way to see ye, Nancy,” the other answered, quietly, and never glancing at the Captain, who stood, looking rather uncomfortable, but with his eyes fixed upon her frank face, made more so than ever by contrast with that of his companion; and, meanwhile, the Captain’s own visage had assumed a shade, ruddier, if possible, than usual.

“Were ye?” said Nancy. “I’m just on my way to the village, to do an errand; so come ye back with me. An’ ’tis worth while, too, for they say a whole company o’ redcoats be come ashore,” and again she simpered, and tossed her yellow head until the long gold earrings tapped her white neck as they swayed to and fro.

“No, thank ye; I’ve no taste for redcoats,” Betty retorted sharply, looking now, and rather fiercely, at the Captain, who was still staring at her with evident admiration.

“Ye be surely not o’er polite, Mistress Betty,” said Nancy, an equal tartness showing in her tone. “But ye be welcome as the rest, to choose company; an’ ’twill not be ours, for we be going



to have a look at the soldiers, eh, Captain?"

But the Captain, with his bold eyes fixed on Betty, made no reply. He stood with his back turned to the road coming from the village, and so failed to notice two women who were drawing near from that direction. No more had Nancy, who had no eyes but for Betty's pretty face, and no thought but of some sharp words wherewith to taunt her,—a favorite pastime of her malicious nature.

The newcomers approaching slowly, proved to be a handsome and well-dressed lady, in company with Mistress Robey, the wife of the landlord of the Pine Tree. They seemed to be out for a walk, for Mistress Robey appeared to be calling her companion's attention to the scene about them, as she pointed along the road to the far-off houses, or out to the water, where a few dingy-sailed herring boats were beginning to creep out to the night's fishing on the almost windless sea.

The stranger was young and slender, and she was clad after a fashion unusual and rich, for those parts. Her dress was of heavy silk, and Betty could hear it rustling as she passed along. It sounded in her ears like the wind blowing



amongst the dried corn husks. She could see the glint of gold in the lady's ears and about her neck. She made no doubt that she was the one Billy had told her of, who had come in one of the recently-arrived ships.

Neither Nancy or the Captain had as yet seen anything of this. The girl still had her eyes fixed upon Betty, and appeared to be searching her shallow brain for some words of annoyance or injury which she could fling at her in the presence of the Captain. At last she said, "An' since ye have such distaste for redcoats, Mistress Betty, perchance a sailor's color be more to your liking, since ye stayed so long to converse with that sort down on the beach yestere'en."

Betty now looked full into the other girl's large, glassy eyes, gleaming with spite, and replied with perfect calmness, "My likes an' doings seem to concern ye nearly. Pray what business be it o' yours with whom I hold converse, or when, or where?"

The Captain's face had now lost all of its pleasant humor, and he seemed to be taking considerable interest in the conversation.

Nancy dropped a mocking courtesy, as she replied, "Aye, it seems to be my business just



now, inasmuch as I should like to ask, have ye seen, this day, the man with whom ye were talking so earnestly when I passed down the road yestere'en?" And there was a concentrated undertone of malice in her voice, that assured Betty that her surmises were correct.

She was positive now that Nancy knew of Dan's ill-fortune, if indeed, she had not been instrumental in bringing it upon him. And so, full of indignation at the girl's cruel treachery, her dark eyes flashed fire that devoured all their wonted softness, and she raised her small head haughtily, as she exclaimed, "Nancy Harris, I never knew 'till now what a wicked girl ye were!"

Whatever Nancy had to say in reply to this was stayed by the strange lady and her companion pausing beside them. The Captain saw them first, and whirled suddenly about, a wicked oath escaping from his lips. Betty had never before seen his face so colorless.

For several seconds they stood, staring at the lady, whose angry eyes, taking no heed of the others, were fixed upon Captain Rathborn's pallid face. Mistress Robey, meanwhile, stood by wondering and looking very uneasy, her eyes wandering from her companion to the officer,



and back again. But at length she ventured to say, "This be the Captain Rathborn, Mistress, ye were inquiring for."

"Aye, that I well know, good dame," the lady replied, but never removing her gaze from the man's face.

Then she said to him, with a mocking smile, "You seem pleased to see me." He made no reply, still standing as though petrified. Then she continued, coming a little nearer to him, "Perhaps I have come at a wrong time, and so spoiled some of your usual pretty sport."

And now he was able to speak, and "D — n you!" burst from his pale lips. He could say no more, but stood there, his features distorted by mortification and rage.

Nancy now spoke up. "Who be ye?" she demanded, haughtily, addressing the stranger.

The latter's dark eyes turned upon the girl for a second, with calm regard; then she said, "May I inquire who *you* are, that ask me such a question, and in such a manner?"

Nancy drew close to the Captain's side, as she tossed her head disdainfully, "I am the lady this gentleman will marry."

Betty's eyes opened in wonder, as she recalled



her Grandfather's injunctions, addressed to her that very morning, and a feeling of utmost relief came to her.

But her attention was again directed to the stranger, who laughed slightly, and said to Nancy, "Let me assure you, whoever you are, that you will find some difficulty in becoming the *lawful* wife of that 'gentleman,' as you be pleased to call him."

"What do you mean? Who are you?" Nancy demanded, but with her chin raised less loftily than before.

"Who I am, will tell you what I mean, girl," the other answered, with sudden fierceness. "I am this villain's lawful, wedded wife!"

Nancy started back with a scream, and Betty's mouth opened wide in amazement and consternation, while Mistress Robey drew near to her guest, as though fearing for her safety.

Betty was the first to recover herself, and, with the instinct of true womanhood, she, for the nonce, lost sight of her own troubles, in the sight of the humiliation that had come upon another, even though this other were one who had done her so grievous an injury. And so she came and stood beside Nancy, who now turned to Captain



Rathborn, and cried, almost hysterically, "Speak, sir? Be this woman telling truth! Say that what she said does be false!"

The man, scoundrel that he was, turned from her, making no reply. But the lady spoke again, disregarding Mistress Robey's entreaties that she should return to the Inn with her; and her manner was much calmer than before, as she said, "That, he dare not say, for I have those with me who can prove my words."

She had scarcely finished, when the Captain turned upon her in a perfect fury of rage.

"D——n you for a whey-faced, interloping meddler," he cried, and advanced, as though to strike her; but Mistress Robey interposed her robust arm and pushed him back.

Poor Nancy had now all the answer she required, and bursting into tears, she caught hold of Betty, and dragged her away with her, as she sobbed, "Come, Betty—come ye home with me."

Soft-hearted Betty, her head in a whirl, but with her heart full of compassion for her fallen foe, readily complied. They were soon locked in Nancy's own room, and then she heard, with mingled satisfaction and sorrow, the contrite confession the wretched girl poured forth, as to



her share in the ills which had befallen Dan.

Nancy told how she had lured him to visit her the night before, by a false message regarding a cargo her father wished to ship in his charge, claiming that she had been led to do this by the Captain's promise of marriage, and his assurance that for his, (the Captain's) own safety, Dan must be gotten out of the way, and kept prisoner for a few days or weeks, as the case might be. And though Nancy did not confess to it, Betty well knew that the jealousy incited by seeing Dan conversing so earnestly with herself that afternoon, had also prompted her to take part in this vile plot.

"And oh, Betty! promise me ye'll never, never tell," Nancy said, between her sobs, having completed her confession. "For should Father come to know o' this when he returns, I think he'll kill me."

"He will never know more than will other folk, unless ye tell yourself," Betty replied, calmly. "I will never speak o' the matter."

"Not even to Dan? Oh, promise me ye'll never tell Dan;" and Nancy's hot hands clutched Betty's cool little fingers, as she sat on the bed beside her.



Betty hesitated a moment before replying, and her red mouth quivered, as she said, "Nancy, I mayhap, may ne'er see Dan again, in this world, to tell him aught."

"Betty! Betty! Nancy cried in an agonized voice, "Ye don't mean to have me believe they have done harm to Dan? Oh, Heavens! An' I thought *that*, I'd jump into the sea!" And the girl raised her miserable self from the pillow, and glared wildly out of the window, where the daylight was growing golden with the sunset.

"By to-morrow, I will come an' tell ye, I think," Betty said; and her voice was very low, and tears glittered in her eyes.

"What d'ye mean?" Nancy cried, feverishly. "Do ye know where to find him?" There was, even now, a note of jealousy in her tone; and Betty, taking heed of this, looked at her coldly for a moment before replying.

"No, I don't," she said, "But I know those who think they do; an' by to-morrow I shall know for surety."

"An' will ye truly come an' tell me?"

"Yes, I promise ye I will, else send Billy."

"An' ye will never, never tell aught that I have told ye?" "No!" Betty said with decision.



“Not e'en Dan, when ye see him—an' ye see him?”

Betty hesitated, and the other girl, watching with hungry anxiety the sweet face beside her, now marvelled to see a strange light, as if from a new-born self within, illuminating every soft, girlish feature. It seemed to lose its childish look, and to become womanly.

Betty was seeming to hear a voice, repeating to her those words, so full of promised blessings, from the Sermon on the Mount. And it told her, that if she forgave and protected Nancy, God would more surely keep her lover safe, and so answer her passionate prayers. The thought brought to her a heavenly peace, as though an angel were passing; and this it was that Nancy saw, and which, shallow and flippant as was her nature, she recognized by intuition.

“Yes, I will promise faithfully, never to tell e'en Dan,” and Betty's voice sounded afar off, and her eyes looked out through the window, out over the far-stretching purple sea, where her gaze rested as though entranced.

“Bless ye, Betty! I'll do anything for ye, after this!” Nancy cried as she kissed the other girl's hand. “I wish I was as good as ye be.”



Nancy's excited words and manner seemed to arouse the other, and hastily withdrawing her hand, she said she must be getting home.

"Wait a moment 'till I show ye somewhat," said Nancy, hurriedly. And she arose from the bed, a rather dishevelled mess of bright finery and touselled yellow hair, her eyes red and swollen, the bright color diffused generously all over her pretty face.

Crossing the room, she went to a tall chest of drawers upon the other side, and took from it a leather box, which she brought over to Betty, who now stood leaning against the window.

Nancy lifted the lid of the box and the light struck fiery sparkles from the jewels of a gold bracelet, lying in cotton-wool, inside. Then she took it from its resting place, and turned it about, so as to catch the light.

"See?" she exclaimed, "See how fine! Captain Rathborn gave it me last time he was down from Boston. I want to give it ye, Betty, so that we be always friends hereafter. 'Twill look finer than ever on your pretty arm," and as she spoke, she clasped it about Betty's dimpled wrist.

Betty drew herself up proudly, and unfastening the bracelet, she handed it back, saying, "I'd



as lief have a 'rattler' 'bout my wrist, considering whence the bauble came. An' see ye, Nancy, my promise 'll not be more faithful kept for a gift being betwixt us, than though there be none."

Nancy looked a bit abashed, but, withal, relieved, as she took the glittering bracelet and clasped it around her own white arm, saying, "So be it. Ye were ever a queer one, Betty, but ye be good; I wish I were as much so."

"Ye've as much cause to be good as ever I had," Betty answered, rather primly. "An' now hinder me no more," she added. "Grand'ther will be angry, I fear me, an' I'm late." And she was soon speeding toward the old Squire's house, her ears bearing a last earnest appeal from Nancy, that she should not forget about sending word to her next day, as to Dan's safety.



## CHAPTER V.

In the dining-room at Squire Peach's house, the shadows had grown dark, and the night, coming black against the glass, made a mirror of each pane, as Betty, crouching in one of the big window-seats, gazed out seaward. With a grateful heart, she watched the darkness gather, and yet there was a sense of great dread upon her, as of some unknown danger menacing either Dan or herself. And this feeling was not lessened by the fact of her being alone in the house, excepting that Cata was in the kitchen; for the Squire had not yet returned, and Billy was also abroad, where, she did not know.

The tall Dutch clock ticked loudly; a solitary cricket was piping its contented song somewhere about the loose stones of the old hearth; while now and then the vine without, tapped upon the panes with ghostly fingers; and above them all,



coming in a dull monotone, was the sound of the sea.

The clock now chimed out the hour of seven, and each stroke seemed to fall upon the girl's senses like the strokes of the hammer upon an anvil; while old Cata came hurrying in from the kitchen to peer in its face by the aid of the dim candlelight, as though disbelieving her ears.

"Seven o' the clock, Honey! Where d'ye s'pose yer Grand'ther be? His fish be dryin' away to chips in de oven, an' he'll 'mos' kill Cata when she sets it afore him. I'se glad we's got de cold joint in de house."

The girl made no reply; nor did any movement assure the old negress that her young mistress was conscious of her presence.

"Does ye sleep, Honey?" she said, anxiously, after waiting a moment.

"No, Cata," came in Betty's sweet voice from the darkened window-seat.

"Be ye lonesome?"

"No. Why should I be?" And Betty turned her head and looked at the old servant.

"Ye was so still,—dat's all," Cata explained. Then, with much anxiety, "D'ye 'spose de joint'll satisfy de Squire?"



"Yes, yes," her young mistress said, rather impatiently. "Set it before him, an' say nothing o' the fish."

"As ye say, Honey, as ye say; ye always knows de bestest t'ing to do;" and Cata made her way back to her own domain.

And now the sky was brimming with stars down to the very ocean's edge, that ran like a dark wall across the horizon. Betty looked up to Jupiter, set like an emerald among the gold-dust-like scattering of lesser stars, as her young heart prayed, "Oh, God, let me find Dan this night! Let me find him safe—unharméd!"

Half past seven came, and she was still alone, for neither her Grandfather or Billy had returned. And now the time had come to set forth for the lighthouse, where she knew Ben was waiting for her to join him in the quest for Dan Marr.

She could muster little in the way of appetite; but appreciating the necessity of sustaining her strength, and not knowing to what test it might be subjected, she ate as much supper as she could, and then, wrapping herself warmly, in anticipation of her long trip in the open boat, she stole out, and sped away, keeping to the most unfrequented paths.



As she hurried along, she noticed what seemed an unusual commotion in the village ; for she could look across the fields as the sounds came to her. She saw many lights coming and going in various directions, but all she could do was to pass along, wondering what it all signified.

All was quiet about the old wharf, a darker lump of shadow denoting the craft made fast to its great iron rings, while farther out on the black waters of the harbor the two recently arrived ships loomed, phantom-like, their huge proportions scarcely determinable through the darkness.

The fresh wind, damp with the night, flashed into her face ; and the spray, cold breath of the sea, everything about her, yes,—the very air itself, seemed to the girl fraught with some great, soon-to-be-realized event.

She found Ben already waiting for her. He had grumbled a bit at first at the idea of taking Betty with him, but his wife, with her wonted masterfulness, had overcome all his objections, and he was in the best of humors when the girl arrived.

They lost no time in getting started, for there was no moon, and the wind was favorable for a tolerably speedy run down to Gull Rock. And



so they were soon on their way over the precipitous thread of a path that lay across the mass of jagged rocks, to a sandy beach below, shut away on all sides from the village, and looking directly out to the open sea, where the boat was waiting for them. And as they walked along, Meg told Betty of the basket of food and liquor already stored in the boat, as well as a goodly supply of warm wraps. Indeed it seemed as though the kind, thoughtful soul had forgotten nothing necessary for the girl's comfort, or that would be useful in restoring Dan's strength, after his long fast.

She warned them unceasingly of the danger of showing a light upon the water, and was full of suggestions looking to their safety. She stood on the beach, with her lantern wrapped partially about by the folds of her cloak, as they pushed off, taking with them her "Godspeed."

"Here ye are, my hearty," said Ben, jocosely, as, a few minutes later, he assisted his young companion aboard the sailboat. "I take it ye have ye'r ship's papers signed an' sealed most proper; and he was still chuckling to himself when he took his seat in the stern.

The little craft at once shook out her sails,



and sped away into the darkness before the strong breeze. Betty, looking about her, felt herself to be a very small atom upon the great inky sea, with the night skies star-set overhead.

"D'ye feel fearsome, Mistress?" Ben asked, after a time. But the girl assured him that she felt perfectly safe and comfortable; and this seemed to relieve his mind.

"Aye," he muttered, as though to himself, "'Tis a brave heart, an' a true heart. The Lord helps all such for a surety; for they be o' His own making." And nothing more was said by either.

In an hour's time or less, the black mass of Gull Rock lifted itself from the dark floor of the ocean upon their right. Altering his course by only a trifle, Ben steered directly for it. When within a hundred yards, he let go the anchor, and then, after depositing Betty carefully in the small rowboat, he pulled for the rock with a rapidity and assurance indicating more than one nocturnal visit.

"'Tis helpful for our work, Mistress," he said, as his strong arms sent the boat speeding through the black water, "that the task we be on, came this week; for next, by now, the moon'd be



shinin' bright o'er our heads. Ye see, for what we have to do, the darker, the safer." His gruff voice was pitched very low, as he helped her out of the boat and made it fast; then he fumbled a minute for the horn lantern.

"Are ye sure ye have the tinder box to make light, once we be within the cave?" Betty asked, nervously clasping his strong arm, as she let him lead her up among the rocks, where a rude pathway seemed to have been cut.

"Aye, I have," he replied. "Never ye fear but Meg have thought all things out careful. An' now, Mistress, remember, that ye never tell soul, all ye'r life, o' aught ye may find out 'bout the place." He spoke with much earnestness, and thanked her in his rude way when she eagerly gave him the asked-for assurance.

Presently the path they had been slowly and carefully climbing began to descend, and twist about. Then the girl, her eyes strained to see all she could in the gloom about them, began to realize that a darker mass than the night which surrounded them, was beginning to steal over her head, blotting out all the stars. They were within the cave, Ben now pausing to light the lantern, a task performed by him with slow,



clumsy elaboration, accompanied by much heavy breathing. And now was shown Betty's eager face, her great dark eyes having an expression as though they would never cease to look and wonder. Old Ben's sturdy form and kindly face were also revealed, and as Betty's eyes fell upon him he seemed to her like a guardian angel, albeit his sanctity was arrayed in a long, loose pea-jacket, leather knee-breeches, worsted upper garments, knit woolen stockings, and great leather shoes.

All about them lay jugs, bottles and flasks, of various sizes and shapes. Betty glanced at these with fear in her face, which was increased to dread, as her eyes sought the furthestmost bales, lying away where the shadows lurked darkest, for these were to her horribly suggestive of prostrate human forms.

Seeming to surmise her thought, old Ben said, softly, "Master Dan won't be here, my pretty; 'twill be in another cave beyond this. Here be the way in."

As he spoke, they had come to a stout oaken door, doubly barred, and set into the rock with rough, clumsy hinges. Giving Betty the lantern to hold, Ben proceeded to draw the bars; then,



laying hold of an iron ring, he pulled with all his strength. But the door opened only a very little way—a mere crack, being manifestly made fast on the inner side.

Ben swore softly, and under his breath; then pausing a moment to wipe the moisture from his face, he said to Betty, as he took the lantern, “He be surely within here, my pretty. They’d never take such care else to make the door fast in such way. Ye see, it be made fast on t’other side with a rope, belike. Then they crawled out the hole that lets out from t’other cave to the sea. It be such a snug fit that way, one must leave skin an’ clothes behind amost, to get through it. They must ’a’ been well paid, the cutthroats, to work so hard.”

“What be it ye will do now, Ben?” Betty asked, showing much anxiety; for the old fellow, having set the lantern on a rock near by, had taken a murderous-looking knife from his pocket, and was proceeding to enlarge a small hole which appeared in the door before them.

“I be making this hole big enough, Mistress, to get my fist through, with a bit o’ fire in it; then I’ll burn in two the rope that I think does be holding the door fast on t’other side.”



Betty waited beside him with what patience she could, as she glanced fearfully about, and strained her ears to catch any sound of approaching footsteps. But she heard nothing,—not the slightest sound broke the deathlike silence that lay about them with the darkness, save the labored breathing of Ben, as he hacked fiercely at the door with his knife.

At length, deeming the hole of sufficient size, he took a piece of wood from the litter upon the floor, and lit it, torch-like. Then, thrusting one hand through the hole, he groped about to ascertain the exact position of the rope which he knew was holding the door fast; and as his fingers encountered it, a grim smile touched his lips.

“Ah—ha! So I thought,” he ejaculated, in a tone of great satisfaction. Then, pushing in the burning wood, he set the rope afire, as was speedily shown by the sudden light that sprang up from the other side, touching brightly the splinters about the jagged aperture.

“Oh, Ben; do ye call now, an’ see an’ he be there,” Betty said, her voice full of entreaty. The old man complied, and thrusting his lips as far as possible through the opening, he called Dan by name,—softly at first,—and then louder.



"Who be ye?" came to them faintly from within.

"Lord o' compassion! He be there! Master Dan be in there my pretty Mistress," exclaimed Ben, appearing to awake to new excitement.

Betty said nothing, but laid hold of the great iron ring with her own little fingers, and tugged at it with might and main, as though her slight strength would suffice to pull open the heavy door.

But at length the rope yielding, the girl rushed into the darkness of the inner cave, her agitated skirts fanning into brightness the smouldering hemp, as she flew past. Ben followed with the lantern, stamping out the sparks as he went by.

More bales, casks and débris were piled up here upon the sandy floor; and away over in a far corner, where the rocky walls, running sharply together, made a narrow corner, huddled in a dark cloak, which, falling apart, showed him to be hobbled with a chain from wrists to ankles, lying prone upon the sand, was Dan Marr!

Betty was the first to see him, as with a wild cry that went echoing through the place, she flew to where he was lying; and falling upon her knees, she wrapped her soft arms about his throat, as she hid her face in his breast.



"Betty! Betty! My own dear little maid!" he cried, as he rained kisses on the dark curly head lying close to his face. "My own little girl! 'Tis worth being laid here by the heels, I vow, to know ye love me as much as this."

"Ye be not hurt?" she cried, drawing back her head to peer anxiously into his face, as he raised himself.

"Not I, sweetheart, save in feelings; but e'en that smart be o'er for me, since I have ye in my arms," and he softly kissed her eyes and cheeks, where a shower of tears was beginning to rain.

Old Ben, who stood staring at them, his rugged face expressive of the greatest sympathy, now spoke up. "Hearken ye, Master Dan! This be the time to *do*! All the sayin' an' talkin' should come later. My own little craft be waiting for us outside; let's up an' away, afore the bloody cutthroats come 'mong us."

"Ben does be right," said Dan; and Betty, still clasping his hands, sprang to her feet, and essayed to draw him up with her. But he said, "Wait a bit,—wait a bit, little sweetheart. Here, Ben, ye'll have to get the chain off, afore I can stand."

Ben, who seemed to be provided for every



contingency, took from his pocket a hammer, and in a few minutes the chain fell clanking, and Dan stood up, stamping his benumbed feet. "Lead away now, Ben, my man," Dan exclaimed, cheerfully, "an' we'll follow. But I'm wondering however it was that ye got here, or knew to come, an' most wonderful o' all, to have Betty with ye." And he put his strong arm around the childish form and drew her to him.

"Oh, Dan, let's haste," she cried. "Let's haste from this terrible place afore Adam or some o' them come back."

"'Twas he I thought had come when I heard Ben at the door," said Dan, looking down at her. "An' I made sure 'twas to put an end to the dirty work by murdering me. But 'twould be well, I trow, to be ready now for the rascals, an' we meet them. This be better than empty hands," and as he spoke he picked up a large, sharp-edged rock.

"I've thought o' all that, Master," Ben said, quietly; and he held out a murderous-looking dirk-knife, which the other grasped eagerly in one hand, as he clasped Betty's small fingers with the other.

And so, side by side, they followed in the



wake of the old man, who extinguished the lantern as soon as they stood outside under the stars, with the moaning black sea all about them.

They were soon aboard, the little craft speeding landward, with Ben at the helm, and the other two sitting close together, wrapped about with Dan's big cloak,—the same he had been wound and bound in the night before, when his captors carried him so closely to Betty and her companion, and they had thought him a bale of smuggled merchandise. Dan, faint with hunger, needed no light but the stars, to find the way to his mouth with the viands which Meg had sent, and which the girl, with motherly solicitude, now urged upon him.

As he ate, she recounted briefly all that had befallen since their parting the previous afternoon, only that she refrained carefully from any mention of Nancy Harris' name. Bad words escaped Dan when she told of the conversation she had overheard between her Grandfather and Captain Rathborn; but they were silenced by the pressure of the soft little hand that was laid over his wrathful lips. He kissed it, and then asked, quietly, "But ye'd never consent to marry that scoundrel, Betty?"



It did not take her long to give him all the assurance he desired ; and then she told him of the strange lady, and what she had said, and he was silent with amazement.

And now Betty, with a desire to protect her Grandfather, said, "Now, Dan, when Grand'ther comes to know o' this, he will in no wise hearken to the wicked Captain, nor let me be plagued more."

But Dan responded fiercely, "He'd best not, or he'll have a heavy reckoning to settle with Dan Marr ; an' this he may have yet, for ye see, sweetheart, I've felt an' seen your Grand'ther's hand in all the black business o' my own."

Betty could say nothing to contradict him, but she leaned her head against the broad shoulder nearest her, and trailed her small fingers softly about his throat, as she said, imploringly, "Aye, but for all that, Dan, ye'd ne'er do aught to harm Grandfather. Ye must promise me that."

"There be little ye could ask this night that I'd not promise, but—we'll wait a bit an' see." Then, after a pause, "An' I don't fancy being hid away behind Meg's petticoats, like a wrong-doing scamp, I tell ye."

"Well, well,—we'll just wait and see the



morrow," Betty said, in a pacifying tone. "Only, for the night, Dan, ye'll surely do as Meg said."

He turned and looked into her eyes, lifted so pleadingly to his own, in the dim light; then he bent and kissed her.

"For the night, an' for the morning, sweetheart, it shall be as ye say," he said, his face losing its hard expression. "Surely, after the risks ye've run for me, I'd be a dog, to give that little heart more matter to trouble o'er." And so the question was settled.

Swiftly the little craft was speeding to the land, before the ever freshening breeze, for the night was wearing itself away into a gathering storm. The sea had become "broken," as sailors call it, with a mightier force of falling waters.

The breakers were dashing against the lighthouse rocks, and sending hollow murmurings up among the many fissures running, cavern-like, into and under the ledges, when Ben at last beached the rowboat.

The faithful Meg was waiting for them, having been crouched amid the rocks for an hour past. She had startling news for them. Bijah had, shortly before, returned from the village, and re-



ported a great commotion amongst the people, caused by the arrest of several persons who were accused of belonging to the smuggling band. It was said that Captain Rathborn had ordered the soldiers down, and had told them the names of the guilty persons. Neither Adam nor Peter could be found, and no one had seen or knew of the Squire's whereabouts.

When Betty had heard all this, a new fear assailed her, and she exclaimed, "I must go home directly."

"And I will take ye, my little maid," and Dan was striding away by her side.

The girl paused, "Oh, Dan, had ye best go? I am not fearful. I have gone the way alone, at night, many's the time, as Meg knows."

"Those did be times when I was not by, Betty; but now I am by ye, an' ye'll never go at night alone, more," Dan said, with an air of authority.

"But 'tis not wise," insisted Betty. "Some o' them might see ye, then, mayhap, they'd take ye with the rest."

"I have Ben's knife 'bout me, an' I'd have a word to say to that," he replied, in nowise convinced.

And now old Ben spoke up. "Ye'd better let



the lad go, Mistress," he said, "I'll go, too. An' then no harm can befall, for a surety."

"That be right, Ben," exclaimed Meg. "'Tis not right for Mistress Betty to go 'cross fields alone."

The girl was obliged to yield, and bidding Meg good night, was soon on her way home, walking between her stalwart protectors. When they reached the Squire's place, Ben waited at the garden wall, while Dan went in with Betty. They passed noiselessly under the trees, and soon stood beneath her window. Pausing a moment, the girl turned to him, saying in a whisper, "Now, Dan, ye'll go back to Meg, as ye promised, an' keep in hiding 'till I come in the morning."

"Aye, I promised, an' I'll keep my word," he answered in a low voice, at the same time putting his arms about her, and straining her close to his heart, where her little head just reached. Then he laughed softly, lifting her, as though she were a small child, and placed her far up in the branches of the apricot tree.

"Aye," he said as he let go of her. "But ye be a brave, sweet little girl, an' surely have no need o' doors an' stairs. An' now be sure ye come to me at an early hour o' the morning, for



I'll be lonesome without ye, my own sweetheart."

She paused and looked down into his upturned face as she whispered anxiously, "Ye'll wait 'till I come, Dan, be it early or late?"

"Did'nt I promise ye, sweetheart," he replied. "O' a certainty I'll wait for ye, an' it be all day."

"I'll not keep ye so long as all that," Betty said, with a soft laugh. Now go ye quietly back with Ben, an'—good night."

"Good night, sweetheart," he returned, and moved away; but paused a moment in the shadow of the trees to look back and watch her little form as it made its way swiftly, and noiseless as a shadow, up through the branches of the tree. He laughed to himself, softly and happily, as he saw it disappear through the window, which was instantly closed, and the white curtain dropped across the panes. And then he rejoined Ben, and they started to return to the lighthouse.

All that Meg had heard was true. Filled with fear, as well as rage, at the miscarriage of his plans, Captain Rathborn, alarmed lest his military honors should be endangered, and thinking to make a virtue of necessity, had put his soldiers in



possession of such facts as were necessary to bring about the arrests. At the same time, however, he took good care to warn Adam, Peter and the Squire of the impending danger, so that they might take such measures as they saw fit to insure their own safety, knowing that by doing this, they would take flight, and so be removed from his own path.

Ben and Dan, after leaving the Squire's house, had not gone very far along the highway when they heard the sound of swift footsteps ; and stopping to listen, there came to them the hard breathing of the runner, who was coming toward them.

"Have the knife in hand, Master," Ben whispered, hoarsely, as he drew Dan to one side of the roadway. And then the flying form came close to them, and they saw it was a lad of fourteen or thereabouts.

Ben stretched out his hand and caught him, putting his other hand, knife and all, over the boy's mouth to stay the cry to which he attempted to give vent.

"Be this ye, Sammy Holmes?" the old man exclaimed, looking closely at the boy.

"Aye, that it be," answered the lad faintly,



when the big hand was removed from his mouth, although Ben still held his arm by a firm grip.

"'Tis Master Ben, be it?" queried the boy in his turn, and in a tone of relief.

"Aye, 'tis me, goin' home from the fishin', Sammy—me an' my mate, here. We had to land on Squire's beach, down below," Ben answered, reassuringly, deeming it wise, in the interests of safety, to prevaricate a little. "But what ails ye, boy, to be running a race with yeself down the King's highway at this hour o' the night? Have ye seen a ghost, or what have scared ye?"

"Aye, mayhap 'twas a ghost; I don't know," the boy replied, in a tone filled with terror. "I was sound asleep in my bunk up at inn, an' a man all wrapped in a big black cloak came an' shook me by shoulder. I could not see his face. 'Up an' away, boy, or I'll cut out ye're heart. Run, run,' he said, 'or the devil'll catch ye, an' ye don't get to Squire Peach an' bid him up an' away, for the soldiers be comin' to hang him.' An' so I up an' ran; an' that's all I can tell ye, Master Ben. An' now let me run on, will ye?" And Sammy began to whimper.

Ben said nothing, but released the boy, who sped away, and was swallowed up in the darkness.



Ben then turned to Dan, who had remained silent all this time. "What be to do now, Master Dan?" he asked.

"Come back with me," was the quickly spoken reply, "we must tell Betty, an' get her away. We cannot leave her there with the rough soldiers coming on the place."

Ben acquiesced, and they made their way back as rapidly as possible. Leaping the wall, they soon stood beneath Betty's window, and after a handful of gravel had been thrown against the glass, the sash was raised and the girl's little dark head thrust out into the night. She had been sitting on the side of her bed, in the dark, busy with her own thoughts, and had made no movement as yet toward retiring.

"Dan?" she asked, rather than said, in a tone of alarm. "Whatever be amiss?"

"Are ye dressed, little maid?" he asked abruptly.

"Yes, yes," she replied. "What is't?"

"Don't ye tarry to speak another word," Dan said. "But rouse Billy, an' haste ye both to come with Ben an' me to the lighthouse, where Meg will take care o' ye. Quick, quick, my own little maid, for the soldiers be coming."



"I may warn Grand'ther, Dan?"

"No, no," he cried, more loudly than she cared to hear him, and stamping his foot impatiently, "Another be gone to do that, an' better than can ye. Do ye hasten, sweetheart,—hasten, I tell ye. Get Billy, an' come quick,—quick!"

His tone gave terror to her haste, and in a few moments both she and Billy were descending the tree, the boy, who came first, springing nimbly from the branches a few feet from the last gnarled foothold. But Dan caught Betty in his arms before she had gotten so far, and swung her to the ground beside him, clasping her small hands tightly, as he said, breathlessly, "Now run, all o' us,—run! And away the four dark forms sped, across the garden and to the road, which, after going a short distance, they turned from, taking to the fields.

As they crossed the salt marshes, where the village came into plainer view, the rushing storm blast brought fitfully to their ears the steady tramp of soldiers' feet along the highway.

"Will they get Grand'ther, Bett?" Billy whispered, pressing closely against her side, as she stood listening, her cloak streaming out before her in the blast, and Dan's strong arm about her.



"Nay, my lad," Ben said, answering the question for the girl,—“Sammy Holmes carried the warning to him straight enoug’, an’ the old man’s had plenty o’ time to get out o’ the way. He’ll take to the boat, belike, an’ mayhap sail ’round to the lighthouse.”

Dan felt Betty shiver as these words came to her ears, and he bent over and kissed her cheek, as he said, “The old man will be friends enoug’, sweetheart,—never ye fear. He’s cornered, so an’ he’ll have to take us, an’ our ways, for friends, whether or no ; never ye doubt that.”

Old Cata, who fled for safety to the lighthouse, told them how the soldiers battered in the doors of the house, and pillaged the place, turning the well ordered rooms inside out in their search for their victim. It would have been a sorry chance for the old Squire, had he fallen into their hands, for graver charges than that of smuggling had been laid at his door, and he had few, if any, friends, or well-wishers amongst his townfolk.

Failing to find the Squire, the redcoats had, in their rage, set fire to the house, which was entirely consumed ; and so, when the morning broke, nothing save charred timbers was left of what had been the home of Betty and little Billy.



## CHAPTER VI.

When morning came, the two ships lay at anchor still farther out in the harbor; and the small boats pulled up on deck, together with the restless moving about of red, where the soldiers' uniforms gleamed like threatening fires, showed the Britishers were on the alert to guard against any surprise in the way of an attempt at vengeance on the part of the folk on shore.

The inmates of the lighthouse,—all except Billy and old Cata, had passed a sleepless night; and at the first breaking of the day, Ben went into the village, making an errand at the Pine Tree an excuse for gathering whatever information he could for himself and others.

Poor little Betty had a hard time of it, persuading Dan to forego his determination to accompany the old man; but both Ben and Meg joining their entreaties to her own, the hot-



headed young sailor was finally induced to remain in hiding,—at least until Ben should have returned and reported as to what he had learned.

Down in a cosy cleft of the rocks, shut in about with frowning granite, except directly in front, where the open sea stretched, purple and peacefully before them, Betty and Dan were sitting, with Billy close at hand, busy at whittling a clumsy little boat from a small block of wood, and whistling softly as he worked.

The bright sunshine lay like a kind of happy laughter over the sea and land, and not a sound disturbed the silence save Billy's low whistling and the lapping of the water far beneath them, at the base of the rock pile.

The horrors and surprises of the night before seemed like bad dreams,—something unreal, by contrast with the present peace and harmony all around them. But for poor little Betty it was a sort of bitter-sweet, made up of her surroundings and misgivings. It was very sweet to have Dan, rescued and safe, alongside her, but—what might not happen to him, if the redcoats persisted in their search for smugglers? And in this, and against Dan Marr in particular, she was sure Captain Rathborn's vindictiveness would



spur them on, if indeed they needed any incentive in the pursuit.

And her Grandfather,—she wondered where he was, and how faring? He had always, to be sure, been a hard and unloving parent to her; and yet there was in her generous, right-minded heart, a filial, instinctive love for him as her relative, despite his harshness to herself and Billy,—to say nothing of crimes she guessed at, rather than actually knew about.

Thinking of all these things, she presently broke the long silence by asking,—“D’ye think Grand’ther may be safe, Dan?”

He had been looking at the little hand he held in both his own, while he played with her fingers; and he almost laughed aloud as the thought came to him how ridiculously small it was to be called the hand of a woman. As he did not reply immediately, the slender fingers tightened with a sudden grip about his own big brown ones, causing him to stop and look at her, as she repeated, more earnestly, “Do ye, Dan?”

“O’ course,—yes,” he answered, somewhat lamely, and a scowl came to darken his handsome brows; for he was by no means in a forgiving mood with the rascally old Squire, of whose



blackness of heart he was well aware he knew, far more than did the old man's immediate family.

"D'ye think they've got him on the ships, Dan?" Billy asked, looking up with sudden interest; "An' they have, I'd like to go see him, an' get a look at them. I was never aboard such big, brave ships."

"Oh, Billy,—never think o' such a thing," Betty exclaimed, in a new fright, her intuition taking alarm from the speculative interest she detected in the boy's tone.

"Why not?" he asked,—and the query had rather a rebellious undertone. "Why not, Bett? I'd get to see an' Grand'ther be there or no; an' see the ships an' soldiers. Then I could come back an' tell ye."

"But they wouldn't let ye come back, Billy; they'd carry ye off to Boston an' I might never find ye more." The girl clasped her hands as though in supplication, and there was a sound of tears in her voice.

And now Dan very wisely put a damper upon the scheme evidently formulating in the boy's brain, by adding, in a most emphatic manner, "An' so they would,—an', mayhap, swear ye'd



been a smuggler, an' so shoot ye down, else hang ye at the yard arm, afore ever ye saw Boston."

These words made Billy tremble, and his block of wood fell with a clatter down on the rocks at his feet. As he stooped to pick it up, he said, in a scared whimper, "I'll not go, Dan, —I'll not go near 'em."

"See to it an' ye don't," was the sententious reply; and there the matter dropped, as the sound of footfalls coming over the rocks caused them all to turn around. Meg was approaching, with Ben close behind her, he having just returned from the village; and what he had to report was to this effect:

Very few of the smugglers had been captured, —only two in fact, unless the Squire, Peter Trower and Adam Powers had been taken; for none had seen them or could tell aught of their probable whereabouts.

As Ben told of this, a 'knowing glance passed between him and Dan Marr, and the latter said, nodding his head significantly, "Ye an' I know, belike, where they be in hiding; I wot they be safe enoug'. The old Squire had a lot of pluck, —an' Adam's a devil. They'd make such stir, an' they be took, as would let folk know well where they would be."



Here Meg asked if all the soldiers were gone ; and her husband said that so far as was known, all were on shipboard, except perhaps Captain Rathborn, his man, Larry, and the Captain's lady. He said there was much wondering about the Captain himself, as he'd not been seen to go off with his soldiers, and a small boat he often used was still lying by the wharf steps. It was known that his man Larry was at the Harris house, in charge of a servant, as he'd been on a protracted debauch ; and Mrs. Robey had reported the Captain's lady as being locked in her room at the Pine Tree. She'd been ill and sleepless all the first part of the night before,—so the landlady said—for, after the soldiers set out for Squire Peach's house, the Captain, who had for some reason not accompanied them, came down to the tap-room and sent a messenger to the apothecary's for a sleeping potion, saying that his lady was ill, and unable to get rest. And then very early in the morning he had come down and told the landlord and his wife to see that she was not disturbed, as she was asleep. And he had taken the precaution to lock her door, and carry off the key in his pocket, saying she must rest until his return.



This was at an early hour. He had not come back, and none could say where he was; and although Mrs. Robey had been to the door to listen and peep through the keyhole, she could see and hear nothing to indicate that the lady was not still asleep. She, by the way,—the landlady—had seen Adam Powers go up to the Captain's apartments (he had two adjoining rooms) with him when the messenger returned with the sleeping draught; but she could not say when he came down, for, being greatly worn out with the doings of the day and night, she had meantime gone off to seek repose in her own room, whither her husband had preceded her a short time before.

When Ben had finished his story, there was silence for a little time; and then Betty voiced the thoughts of all, as she said in a horrified tone,—“Oh, Dan,—d'ye think any harm have befallen the poor woman? He looked on her with such wicked hate, yestreen; an' but for Mistress Robey, I think he <sup>would</sup> have struck her.”

Dan muttered a wicked word; but whatever was to follow was cut short by Ben, who said to his wife,—“Meg, my woman, I'll go back to Pine



Tree the afternoon ; belike somewhat 'll be stirring by then, an' the boys have work cut out to do."

"Ye'll never meddle with the redcoats, an they stay by the ships, an' let ye 'lone," Meg replied, very sharply.

"We've no stomach for fight," he answered, as he arose to go,—“an' the Britishers haven't ; let 'em stay where they be, else go out the harbor."

As soon as he had gone, Betty turned to Dan Marr, and asked, with much anxiety, “Will they go off, d'ye think, Dan ?”

“Belike,” was the reply ; “they but came down to make a bluster, I take it ; an' Captain Rathborn knows enoug' to think with me, the sooner all get from here, less likely they be to learn things o' him that be well his King an' enemies don't come to know."

Soon after this, they took their way back to the lighthouse, for it was now time for Meg, with Cata's willing assistance, to prepare the noon-tide meal. Ben was already at the window, with the glass levelled at the two distant ships that lay, motionless, black hulks on the glassy sea.

“There be little breeze, to be sure,” he mut-



tered,—“but ’tis ’nough to start with; an’ they be goin’, why don’t they start? There’ll be less wind, an’ the day wears on.”

Dan had now come up beside him. “Can ye make out what they be doing?” he asked.

“Yes, they look to be exercising their legs, measuring the decks, fore an’ aft,” Ben drawled out, handing the glass to the young man.

“They be keeping sharp lookout, I should say,” Dan remarked, his eye glued to the glass. Then he laid it down and turned to the other man, as he asked, “Whatever be they waiting for, d’ye think, Ben? It must be ’tis the Captain. Wherever can he be, an’ what doing, all this time? I know—an’ I’d like to have a whack at him, afore he gets away from land,” and his face took an ugly look.

“Dan,—Dan,—don’t ye meddle with him,” Betty exclaimed, in a terrified voice. She had just come in from the other room, and over-heard him.

At the sight of her, the scowl gave place to a smile,—but he only said, “Ne’er mind, sweetheart; don’t ye worry your little head o’er it.” And this assurance, ambiguous as it was, seemed to quiet her.



It was well along in the afternoon when Ben started to make his second trip to the village. And this time, Dan Marr persisted in accompanying him,—he having at length obtained Betty's consent, albeit it was given with much secret misgiving. But the girl took a stray bit of comfort in the fact that the two men took Billy with them ; for she felt that cautious old Ben would not have permitted the lad to go, if he anticipated any trouble.

The ships still lay with furled sails,—the restlessly moving redcoats showing here and there on their decks like spots of flame. Betty and Meg sat by the window and watched them for awhile through the glass, the elder woman being too greatly excited to touch the needle sticking in the work that lay huddled across her lap. They could single out particular individuals on the ships' decks, and made comments ( not always of a complementary nature ) on their personal appearance.

"Oh, Meg," the girl exclaimed, "what a dreadful looking man that do be,—he with a red nose. Here,—look through the glass, an' see him standing there by the mast ; he was just waving his arm to some one."



"Ye-s, my poppet," Meg responded, slowly, as she took the glass. And then her thin lips tightened ominously, as her shrewd gray eye gazed at the enemy.

"Dirty Britisher,"—she said, contemptuously,—"I wish my eyes might be bullets, to hit him! His nose does be red enough, surely, to be sighted so far away. It looks more like currant jelly, than a nose,—an' 'tis painted the color 'tis, I warrant, with the fine rum o' some o' the poor fellows he's seekin' to hang. An' that, only to make boast o' himself, afore King George's throne, an he sets foot 'gain in his own cursed land."

The sun was westering,—its level slants of light fell redly across the land; and the sea was already showing a blackening floor, yet the trio had not returned from the village. Meg had announced very emphatically her determination to show no light in the old tower; for, she said, "Let 'em come into harbor this night (an' that be what they be lying off there, plotting), an' they'll like run on the Sinking Rocks ledge, in the darkness,—an' go down,—an' so do no more harm to peaceable folks."

She was already busying herself with prepara-



tions for the evening meal, when Betty, tired of staying within doors, went out, and down to the strip of beach; where, seating herself on a large smooth rock, she watched the darkening sea, and listened to the crying of the crickets in the long dry grasses about the headland.

Presently, around the far away corner of one of the ledges, she saw an old woman coming slowly toward her. She seemed feeble, and much bowed over, her head and shoulders huddled from sight in the cloak-like garment she wore,—of the style of the time.

Although somewhat surprised by so unusual a sight at this hour of the day as well as at this place, where strangers were seldom seen, the girl remained quiet, observing the woman's approach, wondering, meanwhile, who she was, and what seeking.

The old woman drew near and nearer, her bent form and hooded garment entirely concealing her face, until she came close to where Betty sat, still silent, and watching her intently. The girl neither spoke nor stirred, until suddenly,—so suddenly she could never tell exactly how it was done,—the old woman had her in a strong, close grip, and her curly head and pretty face



were covered so quickly by some enfolding wrappings, that she could only struggle vainly, and cry out faintly with surprise; this being turned to terror, as an intuitive dread and loathing told her who her assailant was likely to be.

Whoever it was,—so fiercely close was she held that she could feel her captors heart-beats—as, in a moment, and without a word being spoken, she felt herself borne swiftly along in the other's arms. She could hear hurried breathing, through all the wrappings enclosing her small head, as it lay helplessly on a broad, strong chest,—and could hear, as well, the hurried beat of the footfalls on the shingle. The tread was now firm and quick,—utterly unlike the feeble, uncertain steps that had approached her a while ago.

Then she heard other steps coming to meet them, and a hoarse voice she recognized as that of Adam Powers' asked, "Got her?"

At this, there came to her the full meaning of what it all meant; and a new frenzy rushing upon her, put fresh strength into her slight body and limbs. She struggled violently in the strong arms that held her like an iron vise; then, finding it impossible to free herself, she beat



with her small hands fiercely against the broad breast upon which her head and shoulders were pillowed.

"Better use a rope, Captain," she heard Adam say, but she could not hear the reply, as a strong hand was placed upon her head, pinioning it so closely that one of her ears was crushed into her wrappings, while the other was directly underneath her captor's palm, the pressure causing a sound as of the sea roaring in her poor, frightened brain.

She felt that he who held her was pausing for breath,—and then he seemed to climb over something, while still holding her as firmly as before. Then she knew he was seating himself, and she felt one of her ankles graze something that felt like the edge of a boat-seat.

The next moment she was assured of this, for, the heavy hand lightening its pressure on her ear, she heard the grating keel of a boat pushing off; and next came the sensation of gliding over the water, with the sound of oars working in the rowlocks.

A numb despair seemed to come upon her, and she lay inert,—scarcely caring sufficiently to struggle any further. Indeed, she was well nigh



swooning,—not only from fright, but, as well, by reason of the stifling folds of the cloth wound about her head and face.

Presently she felt some one's mouth close to her ear, and recognized Captain Rathborn's voice, as his breath struck burningly through the wrappings.

"Betty,—sweet little Betty," it said. "Don't be afraid,—no harm shall come to you."

Not the slightest movement betrayed that she had heard him,—and then Adam said, "Belike the girl's fainted, Captain." He was rowing slowly and cautiously, as though striving to make as little noise as possible, and to avoid—should anyone be watching from the shore—doing aught to arouse suspicion.

He had no sooner spoken, than Betty felt the wrappings being hastily removed, and a rush of sweet fresh air came to her,—and opening her eyes, she met the anxious gaze of Rathborn, his detested face bent down over her own, and his shoulder and breast pillowing her unwilling head, as she half sat, half reclined, against him.

She uttered no word, but struggled to sit erect ; and this, at the moment, he made no attempt to



prevent. Then she looked about, and her first rapid glance told her they were far from shore, and still farther away from the British ships; and it seemed as though Adam was pulling toward the far away, lonely point of land known as the Chasm. The man was working more briskly with his oars, while now and again throwing furtive glances over his shoulder, and toward the distant shore; and he growled out that the Captain had better make the girl lie down, or else keep her head and face covered.

"There does be," he said, "a clean sweep for a glass from the lighthouse, full at us, 'till we round the point yonder; an' old Ben has one that does be the devil's own eyes for seeing."

As he said this, Betty tried to gain her feet, with the hope of showing herself more distinctly, should there be such a happy chance as that suggested by his words. But Rathborn, as though divining her motive, clutched her fiercely, and holding her down in the bottom of the boat, wrapped her head in the concealing mufflings.

At this rudeness, the poor girl broke down utterly, and began to sob, paying no heed to the Captain's would-be soothing remonstrances; while Adam, in no wise affected by her



tears, rowed still more rapidly, his stolid face regarding her much as he might have done the rocks along shore.



## CHAPTER VII.

Had Betty but known the range of vision that had taken in the sight of her distressed face and tumbled curly head, she would not have wept so bitterly.

Dan Marr, returning to the lighthouse with Ben, had looked about for her; and then, his wonder at her non-appearance having turned to alarm for her safety, some instinctive prompting led him to take the glass and scan the enemy's ships, as well as the stretch of sea and harbor which he could cover from the headland. And it was not long before the moving speck of the boat on the wide waste of waters, already getting dusk with the twilight, attracted his attention, causing him to steady the glass for a better look.

The female form in the bow, huddled in dark wrappings, first caught his eye. It seemed to be bending over something like a dark bundle, lying at its feet; and then a sudden movement of this



bundle betokened it to be a human being. The next moment he was startled to see a glimpse of pink drapery, showing vividly, like a wild rose, in the darkness about it.

The thought that this was like Betty's gown,—the one in which he had last seen her,—came to him like a blow, and the glass almost fell from his hand. But, quickly adjusting it, while his heart beat madly, he looked once more; and this time he saw the curly head he loved so well, and for one brief second Betty's own sweet face was before his eyes, and bearing an unmistakable look of terror.

Such a fierce ejaculation burst from his lips as startled Billy, who was leaning on the window-ledge beside him, and lame 'Bijah and old Cata, who sat either side of the fireplace. It caused Meg, who was busy about the room, secretly alarmed and worrying over her pet's absence—to ask anxiously what was the matter.

He made no reply, but kept his hungry, vengeful eyes on the disk that shut in the patch of water, with the boat and its precious freight. And then, sweeping his glance along the boat, he, for the first time, saw Adam Powers' evil face; and another oath escaped him.



With a mind well trained to danger, and hazardous enterprises, quickened now as it was by love, the whole state of affairs was clear to his comprehension. He saw that Adam was pulling for the Chasm, and that he seemed to be avoiding the ships, as well as the shore. And he knew, as though he saw it, whose scarlet coat was hidden under those dark, disguising folds of the seeming female form in the bow of the boat.

When he and Ben had reached the Pine Tree, at an early hour in the afternoon, they found it filled with a crowd of their fellows. There was beginning much fierce talk of vengeance and retaliation upon the redcoats. One of the arrested smugglers had effected his escape,—the other had been hanged down by the wharf, just before the enemy went aboard their ships. Peter Trower, Adam and the Squire, were the only missing ones; and where these were, no one could say.

When Dan had related the story of his recent abduction, the anger of the crowd grew apace,—for he was a general favorite; and had the missing trio fallen into his comrades' hands, just then, they would have fared as badly as any redcoat.



In the midst of all the hub-bub, Mistress Robey came to Dan Marr with the information that Nancy Harris was waiting to speak with him in the little parlor, back of the taproom.

Nancy's bright color was somewhat paled, and her eyes showed traces of weeping, but her attire was as carefully coquettish as usual; but there was no coquetry in the honestly anxious gaze she bent on Dan Marr as he came toward her.

"Oh, Dan," she cried,—“I didn't know where ye were, or if safe, 'till the nigger boy came an' told me he'd seen ye come from the lighthouse with Ben. Betty promised to tell me 'bout ye,—an' she's ne'er been near me,—ne'er sent me a word! I was up at Squire's this morning. I'd not believe that they told o' the place being burned; an' no one knows where any o' the old man's folks be. Whatever's befallen Betty, d'ye think, Dan?”

“She's safe enoug',—the little maid,” answered cautious Dan, very coolly; for albeit he had no inkling of Nancy's recent treachery (thanks to Betty's staunch loyalty to her promise), he felt it advisable to be wary, until the English Captain was known to be out of the place.

“Where be she,—d'ye know where?” the



girl demanded again, the same jealousy sounding in her tone as when, only the day before, she had asked the same question of Betty, regarding Dan Marr's whereabouts.

"I say the little maid be safe, an' that'll have to do for ye now," he replied with decision.

"Why?" There was now a touch of acerbity in the girl's tone.

"Because, Dan said, quite slowly, "I'll see to it an' the d——d English Captain brings no more harm to her."

"Whatever has Captain Rathborn to do with it,—an' I'm thinking 'tis him ye mean?" Nancy asked, in genuine amazement.

At this, all of Dan's smouldering rage burst out, as he replied, "He's more 'to do with it' than he can, an' live, an' he 'bides long hereabout. He plotted to carry her off with him, whether she would or no."

"That's a lie!" the girl cried, her face livid with anger.

"'Tis true," Dan reiterated, keeping his temper,—“an' what be worse, her own old scallywag o' a grandsire was beholden to the scheme, an' favored it."

Nancy gasped, and started back as though



he had offered to strike her. A flood of light suddenly illuminating certain acts and words of her pretended admirer, she grasped the indisputable fact of how completely she had permitted him to make a tool of her too easy vanity and self-complacence,—thus leading her to do that which had Dan Marr but known, he had scarcely stood and talked to her in so amicable a fashion.

Without a word, she turned quickly about, and left the room, and house ; and Dan, wondering at her sudden change of manner, returned to the taproom, and his excited companions.

They were now speaking of the sleeping lady up-stairs, and marvelling that she had as yet not been seen or heard from.

“The Captain said she was not to be distrubed 'till he came back,” Robey said to Dan Marr, as the two stood a little apart from the others, whose loud talking made low speech inaudible. “An’ here it be thus late, an’ he not back yet. What be more,—Nancy Harris just told my mistress a boy brought word to his man Larry (that was up at her place, ye wot) some two hours ago, he was to go out an’ get aboard ship.”

“Mayhap something foul be befallen the



lady," Dan suggested, after a moment's thought.

The landlord glanced over his shoulder apprehensively,—but none of the others seemed to be paying any attention; then he drew near, and lowered his voice still more, as he said, "Just what my mistress be sayin', all along. What d'ye think o' forcin' the door, lad?"

"I say do it," Dan replied emphatically; "break down the door, an' it be necessary. Try an' get word from her first; an' if there be none,—break down the door an' send Mistress Robey to her."

This was decided upon,—and the landlord and his wife proceeded at once to the rooms above. Dan Marr, nothing loth, accepted their urgent invitation to accompany them,—first beckoning Ben out of the crowd, and bidding him have an eye on Billy, who was listening eagerly to the men's talk.

After repeated calls had failed to elicit any response from the supposed occupant of the room, it was Dan Marr who, taking the immense brass knob in the firmest grip his strong brown hands knew, and using his knee as a persuasive force, threw all his strength into the forcing of the clumsy lock. The landlord, aiding with his



broad back and powerful shoulders, made an efficient battering ram,—not to be withstood; and, in a few seconds, the crashing and splintering of wood, and twisting of brass, announced the complete success of the undertaking.

Mistress Robey stood by, watching them, and waiting the *denouement* with a frightened face. She shrank back when her husband, pushing the door ajar, bade her go within and report as to how she might find matters.

“Go in,—go in, woman,” he urged; “there’s naught for ye to fear o’ bodily harm. Dan an’ me’ll stop here ’till ye come back, or call, an’ ye need us.” And thus encouraged, she entered the room.

Almost instantly they heard her calling to them from the inner apartment, her voice sounding full of alarm and consternation. The two men followed the sound, and found her standing in the middle of the floor, her figure rigid with astonishment, and dismay written on every feature.

The room was empty of other occupants than themselves. The dishevelled bed showed that it had been occupied, but the lady was not to be seen. Some of her clothing lay about, and on the little



stand, by the bed, was the small phial which had held the sleeping potion sent for the night before ; it was empty, and a small glass lay overturned beside it.

On the dressing case were her various toilet articles,—all scattered about, and her bonnet was on the roomy old settle standing near the fireplace ; but the heavy cloak she wore when going out-of-doors was missing.

“D’ye think he’s murdered her?” the frightened woman asked her husband ; “he looked at her fierce enoug’ to do it, an’ she came on him talkin’ with Betty Peach an’ Nancy in the road, yestre’en, as I told ye. An’ though never a word was passed all the way back, there was fierce ones up here, after,—though I caught none o’ the meaning. She had her supper up here, an’ he would bring it himself ; so I ne’er laid eyes on her an’ we came from the walk.”

While she was speaking, she continued to peer about the room, stooping even to look half fearfully, as though dreading what she might see, under the bed. And Robey stared stupidly, as with gaping mouth and wide-opened eyes he followed his wife’s movements, while he rubbed his grizzled head in a dazed fashion.



Dan stood for a few moments with scowling brows, as though deep in thought; then he asked, "Did ye think to hunt the Pigeons, if the Captain be stored away there?"

The landlord admitted that he had not thought of doing such a thing; and now began to look a little more as if he was getting something like an idea into his head.

Dan continued, in a speculative mood, as he scowled at the floor, "There's the trap at end o' this hall, that leads down there; it be the only way the lady could be carried from this room, an' nobody see. The Pigeons be the hiding place fewest be likely to know; an' mayhap he stowed her there,—or her body, an' he be villain enoug' to —"

Mistress Robey's cry of dismay cut the sentence short. "Lawks,—lawks!" she exclaimed; "don't ye think such a fearsome thing, Dan Marr."

"'Twas ye first spoke o' the like matter," he reminded her; and then went on in a musing tone,—“There be no saying what the redcoats may come to know o' the doings o' this fine Captain. He'd find it troublesome, as more than one suspects, an' as some know, to tell how well



he be acquainted with some o' the smugglers he be setting 'em on to hunt down. An' he sent Larry to the ships, belike he'll go back that way himself; an' the meaning o' that'll be,—his red-coats haven't found him out. But some o' the cargo in the Pigeons be his own; an' I take it he be too fond o' good rum, at a cheap price, to be willing to go an' leave it behind him. Adam Powers be naught but the Captain's tool, as well as Squire's; an' belike he's missing because o' looking to the running o' that very cargo,—an' Peter Trower with him."

"But whatever did he have need to get rid o' the lady for?" Robey asked, rather irrelevantly.

"I can make good guess o' it," Dan exclaimed, in a sudden burst of rage, and seeming to wake from his musing mood. "I'll tell ye why, Robey. 'Tis that the scoundrel means harm to as honest an' sweet a little maid as breathes,"—and he clenched his teeth, and swung his fists in a way that threw as clear a flood of light upon the state of things for shrewd Mistress Robey's comprehension, as though he had given her the most complete setting forth of the events which had been transpiring about her.

And here the good woman ventured to take



part in the conversation, by urging that the missing lady be searched for at once. "An' she be in the Pigeons, mayhaps, as ye said, Dan Marr, why not ye go with Robey this minute, to search the place?"

Her advice was acted upon at once, and the men, without going down stairs, took the secret way through the trap door at the end of the upper hall,—leaving Mistress Robey to watch for their return by the same route.

Half an hour later, while she was presiding in the taproom, and keeping, meantime, a sharp lookout upon the few maids about the house, to see that nothing might take them upstairs, she saw her husband among the men; and presently he came over to her, and, as he resumed his post at the counter, he told her, in a low tone, to go again upstairs.

This she lost no time in doing,—and to her great relief she found the Captain's lady reclining on the settle, alive, and apparently well, although her face was very pale. Dan Marr was standing with his back toward her, looking out of the window.

He turned around as the landlady closed the door after her, and she saw that his handsome face wore an expression far from pleasant.



“Dearie me!—heart alive!” she exclaimed,—“how frightened we’ve all been o’er ye, to be sure,” and she bustled toward the settle.

The lady covered her face with her slim, white hands, but was silent; and Dan, leaving the window, now walked forward.

“We found her where we thought,” he said; “she was bound fast hand an’ foot; an’ she never knew where she was, or how she came there.” Then, as he went toward the door, “ye better not talk to her now, Mistress Robey, but first get some ’at for the poor soul to eat an’ drink,”—and he lingered on the threshold, as though waiting for the landlady to join him,—which she did in a moment, after spreading a wrap over the poor lady, while she murmured words of sympathy and condolence into her unlistening ear.

As soon as they were outside, Dan gave her, in a few words, all the particulars of the search and rescue. The lady had evidently been drugged, and, while unconscious, had been carried by her husband and Adam, down the secret way to the Pigeons; and there she was left, only waking late in the day to find herself a helplessly bound prisoner, in an unknown place.



Adam had doubtless gone out through the seaward way of the caverns ; and the Captain, returning the way he had gone, came down stairs in the early morning, as the landlady had told. Both men were probably well away by this time, for Dan and Robey had noted that some of the kegs and other merchandise were missing from the Pigeons.

The lady had told them that her brother was an officer on one of the ships. She desired to get word to him of her whereabouts, and of her husband's conduct ; but this, as matters were at present, was not possible. Meanwhile, she was safer in Boston,—and she had acquiesced in Dan's suggestion that she start that very night by the coach in which her husband had come down,—this being still in the stables of the Pine Tree, awaiting his orders.

And it should be here understood that Captain Rathborn had been divided in his mind as to whether he should send word to his soldiers to go back that same night without him, and by the way they had come, and so risk carrying Betty off himself in his coach ; or to trust Adam Powers and Peter Trower with the task of bringing her to Boston in their sailboat, together with



his share of the smuggled goods, which they were to land at a certain place in the town known only to Adam and the Captain himself. The latter course was the one he finally decided to adopt,—deeming it wiser not to risk trusting himself again among his quondam associates.

Ben had preferred to remain at the Pine Tree ; and so Dan, after assuring himself there was nothing more he could do for the Captain's poor wife, returned with Billy to the lighthouse,—to find, as we have seen, that Betty was missing.



## CHAPTER VIII.

The night came dark and still, with only a light wind from the southwest. Overhead, the heavy clouds rolled as though driven before a strong gale, opening now and then to disclose the sky, in which the stars twinkled but faintly ; and at such times, the dim light, falling over the roads and fields, revealed a dark body of men marching rapidly but cautiously, in the direction of the Chasm. And then, the next moment, lumbering masses of vapor were carried forward, blotting out the clear tract of sky, and blurring all objects with an enveloping shadow.

Ben was the leader of the men ; and out on the water was a boat-load of some twenty more smugglers and villagers, with Dan Marr at their head, pursuing the same general direction as their companions on land. None of them knew whether it was only their former mates, Adam Powers and Peter Trower, upon whom they were



to serve vengeance, or whether they would be called upon to measure strength with the red-coats, as well; and little they cared,—for every man of them was filled with indignation and fury.

Not a sound was heard save their own foot-falls,—not a soul did they meet or pass on their way; and every man knew the path too well to hesitate in his movements, albeit the light was so uncertain.

The path they were pursuing swept around the base of the great mass of granite known as the Chasm, to a long stretch of sandy beach skirting the seaward front of the rock-pile, which was indented with one great fissure, a few feet above the base; and in this were many cavern-like openings, and some caves, as the smugglers well knew.

The uncertainty as to whether Betty would be concealed in one of these caves, or on board the "Rambler" (where he felt sure Adam had stored Captain Rathborn's smuggled goods), had led Dan to divide his men; and as he had last seen the girl in the boat, he decided to go himself with the larger body of men, by way of the water.



And now, as they neared the Chasm, he dreaded lest the "Rambler" had put out to sea; and the first sensation of anything in the nature of consolation he had felt since looking through Ben's glass, came to him, as, peering ahead in the dim light, he saw the clumsy hulk of Adam's boat, her spars showing fitfully in the shadow, like lines of India ink drawn sharply against the night sky.

They had approached quite close to her, when the report of a pistol rang out startlingly loud in the deathlike silence.

"Look out, lads,—'tis a signal," Dan cried; "luff,—luff, I say; her sails do be going up,—head her off,—quick!" And now there was no more silence aboard the "Eastwind,"—but shouts and threats, interlarded with oaths, filled the air; but on the other boat all was still.

"That was Peter Trower's barker that sung out," one of Dan's men said.

"Watching to give warning, the scoundrel," another of them muttered.

"Mind ye,"—and Dan Marr's voice was heard above all the tumult, "Mind ye, men,—'tis no matter what may befall the scoundrel Adam, or his redcoat friends. But no harm be to come



to Squire Peach ; an', (unless he bring it on himself) there be no need to harm Peter Trower. He's far more fool than knave, an' what's more, he saved my life once ; an' I should feel sorry an' I be the one to take from him what he gave me."

There was some quiet grumbling at this,—but there was no time for open argument ; for now the "Rambler" was moving slowly and stealthily from her moorings, her sails not yet catching the wind. She had been waiting for the breeze to freshen, as the tide was setting in very strongly ; otherwise Adam might have escaped them by starting at an earlier hour.

Slowly,—very slowly,—moved the pursued, and more swiftly and surely the pursuer bore down on her, until the "Eastwind" was almost directly across the bow of the other boat. Then a grappling iron was thrown ; but it fell short, and dropped, with a loud splash, into the water.

This mishap was greeted with a jeering laugh from the "Rambler"—and all recognized Adam Power's voice.

"Ye concentrated, compounded brimstone limb o' old Nick," a lusty voice shouted from



the "Eastwind,"—"Ye traitor an' scoundrel, Adam Powers—ye've got to give in, for we've caught ye, sure!"

The only response was a volley of imprecations; and by this time another grappling hook was thrown with surer aim, and the two boats were fast being drawn together by strong and eager arms.

A few moments more, and there lay but a little space between them; and then, with a wild rush, the dark figures took possession of the "Rambler's" low deck.

Peter Trower was the first to stand before them; but he remained standing only for a moment. Then he sank to his knees, as he screamed piteously, "Don't ye shoot,—don't ye kill me! I'll not fight,—an' it be Betty Peach, ye're after, she be in the cabin below. Don't ye—"

"Sneaking coward!" The words came in a roar from Adam Powers, who had sprung up behind him from somewhere in the darkness; and the next instant there was a flash from his pistol, aimed at the kneeling Peter, and so his own whereabouts became known to the watchful eyes of his enemies.



Several shots pierced the darkness,—and then all was again silent.

The rest is soon told. The wounded Peter, and the dead Adam, were the only men found aboard, and Trower could tell nothing of Squire Peach.

Dan, hastening to the cabin, found it fast locked. It took him only a moment to break down this, the second door he had destroyed that day,—and his sweetheart was in his arms, weeping bitterly, as she buried her curly head in the folds of his rough coat.

For a moment her tears did more to unman him than had anything else since he last beheld her; and he was well nigh sobbing himself, as he held her close up against his breast.

“Nay—nay, my little maid,” he whispered, brokenly, as he covered her face and hair with kisses,—“’tis all well for ye, now; well an’ safe,—an’ all dangers be past.” But she made no reply,—only clinging still closer to him, and sobbing all the more.

Then, after a bit, she became a little more like herself, and looking up into his face, exclaimed, “Oh, Dan,—Dan,—whate’er would have become o’ me, an’ it hadn’t been for ye?”



"Never ye mind, sweetheart," he answered, smiling down into her tear-dimmed eyes,—“never ye mind that; I know what *will* become o’ ye, Betty, now I’ve got ye once more. Ye’ll be Dan Marr’s little wife; an’ then the devil himself can’t take ye from me. An’ now,” he added, his tone becoming lighter, as though trying to divert her thoughts,—“’tis quits atween us.”

“Whatever d’ye mean, Dan?” Her face was full of alarm, and her arms found their way about his neck.

I mean this,—’t was only last night that, brave little girl as ye be, ye came out to Gull Rock, an’ plucked me out o’ the clutches o’ these same devils that brought ye here to this cabin. An’ now I’ve served ye summat o’ the same turn, an’ so—” but the rest of the sentence was lost in the kisses he showered on her upturned face.

Her self-possession had now become somewhat restored,—and Dan asked, “Wherever is that d——d Captain—do ye know aught o’ him, sweetheart?”

“He be gone off with the ships,—I heard Adam say. But, Dan,—oh,—take me away from here,—take me quickly,—this very minute!” And her face bore a look of terror as she gazed about the wretched little cabin.



“That will I, an’ the true hearts that be with me, my own little maid. Come now,—cheer up, an’ give over tears for good. Ye be safer now than ever ye were; an’ no one can harm ye, I say. Come up on deck with me, an’ show my mates that all is well with ye. ’Twill make ’em happy to know it,—an’ it be all we came for,—to take you back to Meg; and we’d all,—every man jack o’ us,—cut every redcoat’s heart out o’ his dirty body, an’ we’d had ye to carry back.”

There was a loud cheer from the men when Dan and Betty came on deck; and this was echoed by others from their impatiently waiting and listening comrades on the shore, as they recognized the note of victory in the hearty sound coming across the water.

The old Squire was never more seen by any of them. All that served as a clue to his probable fate, was his sailboat, which had always been kept anchored just off the beach, below his house. This, after several days had passed, was picked up out at sea, by one of the fishing craft,—the mast broken,—the sails partially in the water, and everything about it betokening a wreck.

The two ships left the harbor at some hour of



the night,—probably as soon as the darkness favored their departure,—else the redcoats would have been attracted by the shots and shouts from the shore by the Chasm.

With the ships went Captain Rathborn. And it was well for the safety of that recreant officer that he was never again seen in the village. Those were rough, and, in a way, lawless times,—for it was then that fires were being kindled, to break out later, in the struggle for independence,—times when men's hands were swift to carry out the impulses of their first thoughts, if these were stirred by vengeance against treachery and false dealing.

\* \* \* \* \*

Five and twenty years later, came the Revolution; and in the company of men who left the village (now become a town) to join the Continental army, at Cambridge, marched two handsome lads, who, while possessing the stalwart frame and broad shoulders of Dan Marr, had the great soft eyes, and the same curling rings of dark hair, that made so irresistably pretty the little head of that still small, but now dignified matron who once bore the name of Betty Peach.























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